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Gypsy ...

*If I have a little shed,
Still I have that I treasure
Here can I sit and sing,
Fullo content and cheer.*

*here I have a little shed,
Where the Gipsy can be led,
Stable there is I'll bring her here,
All can safely rest till day.*



Zingarella ...

*Se non c'è come meritato,
Signa mecia, pudenate,
Come posse u' muschina
Accettar una regina?*

*Aggio qua una stallicella,
Buona per la semarella:
Paglia e fieno ce ne getto,
Che per tutto lo riello*

THE MADONNA
Entering the Gipsy's Hut.





... all'ingrasso

... all'ingrasso
... all'ingrasso
... all'ingrasso
... all'ingrasso

... all'ingrasso
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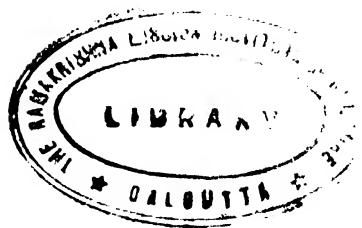


... all'ingrasso

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ROADSIDE SONGS OF TUSCANY.



THE MADONNA AND THE GIPSY.

Gipsy.

God be with thee, Lady dear,
Give thee comfort, give thee cheer!
Welcome, good old man, to thee,
With thy Child so fair to see!

Madonna.

Sister, in this lonely place
Glad am I to see thy face!
God forgive thee all thy sin,
Plant His grace thy soul within.

Gipsy.

By your looks I understand
You are strangers in the land,
Seeking shelter for the night:
Lady, wilt thou please alight?

Madonna.

'Tu che sei sorella mia,
'Tutta piena di cortesia,
DIO ti renda la carità
L'infinita sua bontà!

Zingarella.

Oh scavalca, Signora mia!
Hai una faccia di una Dia.
Ch'io terrò la creatura
Che sto cuore m'innamora!

Madonna.

Noi veniamo da Nazaretto,
Semo senza alcun ricetta;
Arrivati alla strania,
Stanchi e lassi dalla via.

Zingarella.

Sono donna 'Zingarella;
Benche sono poverella,
T'offerisco la casa mia,
Benche non e cosa per tia.



Madonna.

Oh my sister! that kind word
Is the first that we have heard!
God reward thee from above,
For thy courtesy and love!

Gipsy.

Oh alight, dear Lady mine!
Something in thee seems divine!
Let me—for I long to—bear
In my arms thy infant fair!

Madonna.

We have come from Nazareth here,
All the way in haste and fear:
Weary, lost, on foreign ground,
We no shelter yet have found.

Gipsy.

Though a gipsy poor am I,
Yet to help you I would try:
This my house I offer free,
Though 'tis not a place for thee.



BEATRICE
Of the Field of the Alder-Trees.

Madonna.

Or sia da me DIO lodato
E da tutti ringraziato !
Sorella, le tue parole
Mi consolano al cuore !

Zingarella.

Se non è come meritate
Signoruccia, perdonate ;
Come posso, io meschina,
Accettar una regina ?

Aggio qua una stallicella,
Buona per la somarella ;
Paglia e fieno se ne getto ;
Che per tutto lo ricetto.

E tu, vecchiarello, siedì,
Sei venuto sempre a piedi.
Avete fatto, o bella figlia,
Trecento, e tante miglia.

Madonna.

God be praised without end
For the comfort He doth send!
Sister, kind indeed thou art,
And thy words console my heart.

Gipsy.

If 'tis not as you deserve,
Still I hope that it may serve;
How can I, so poor and mean,
Fitly entertain a queen?

Here I have a little shed
Where the donkey can be led;
Straw there is; I'll bring some hay;
All can safely rest till day.

Father, thou must weary be;
Thou hast come on foot, I see;
Thou hast walked the country o'er,
Full three hundred miles and more.

Oh ch'è bello sto figliarello,
Che par fatto col pennello!
Non ci so dare assomiglio,
Bella Madre e bello Figlio.

E sei stata a Bettelemme—
Signoruccia, ancor teme?
Non avere più paura,
Sei arrivata alla buon ora.

Se ti piace, o gran Signora,
T'indovino la ventura.
Noi, Signora, così fino,
Facciam sempre l'indovino.

Ma quel che dirò a te,
Tu lo sai meglio di me.
Alla tua bella presenza,
Mostri assai di sapienza.

Esco pazza d'allegrezza,
Piena son di contentezza.
Che, da quanto io discerno
Fosti eletta tu ab eterno.

Roadside Songs of Tuscany.

TRANSLATED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANCESCA ALEXANDER,

AND EDITED BY
JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,
HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, HONORARY FELLOW OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE,
AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART, OXFORD

COMPLETE IN TEN PARTS, WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS.

GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.
1885.

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Lovely is this Child to view,
More than artist ever drew.
Nothing with you may compare,
Babe and Mother, both so fair.

Thou hast now from Bethlehem fled;
Still I see thee pale with dread.
Lady, there's no cause for fear;
Herod cannot reach thee here.

Lady, it would please me well
If I might thy fortune tell:
Ever since the days of old,
All my race have fortunes told.

Yet, with all my art can do,
I may tell thee nothing new;
For in thy sweet face doth shine
Wisdom greater far than mine.

Ah! this joy is all too great!
Scarce my heart can bear the weight.
Wondrous things mine eyes behold
God hath chosen thee of old!

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HAZELL, WATSON, AND VINNY, LIMITED
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

Fosti sempre da DIO amata,
Pura, santa, immacolata ;
Tu sei quella di DIO Madre,
Che ha in Cielo suo Padre.

Anna chiamavasi la tua Madre,
E Gioacchino il tuo Padre.
Ti chiamerò, Signora mia,
Col bel nome di MARIA.

E crescuta ti presentaro,
Ed al tempio ti portaro.
Là mangiavi, là dormivi,
Là insegnavi, là leggevi.

Poi di dettero questo sposo,
Puro, santo, e grazioso.
Per miracolo di DIO,
La sua verga li fiorio.

Concepisti sto Bambino,
Per lo Spirito Divino.
Questo Figlio è vero tuo,
Ma sto Sposo non è Padre suo.

I.

BALLADS, OR MINOR POEMS,

OF WHICH THE WHOLE, OR ILLUSTRATIVE PORTIONS, ARE GIVEN
IN THIS WORK.

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God hath caused thee to endure,
Ever holy, spotless, pure.
And on earth hath granted thee,
Mother of the LORD to be.

Joachim and Anne his wife,
Were thy parents in this life.
Thee, my Lady, I will call
MARY, sweetest name of all.

To the Temple did they bear
Thee, a child, and left thee there;
Where thou didst, for many a day,
Eat, and sleep, and read, and pray.

Till for thee a mate they find,
Joseph, holy, pure, and kind:
By a miracle of God,
Flowers did blossom on his rod.

But this Infant's birth had place,
By the Holy Spirit's grace:
Thou art Mother . . . But I know,
He no father hath below.

II.

PERSONS

WHOSE CHARACTERS ARE SKETCHED, OR SOME ACCOUNT GIVEN OF
PASSAGES IN THEIR LIVES, IN ILLUSTRATION OF THE
SONGS OF TUSCANY.

[I have thought it better to give the references to them in their proper sequence
in the book than in alphabetical order.]

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1. BEATRICE OF PIAN DEGLI ONTANI. (The first general account of her is given in Miss Alexander's preface, in the first number. Added details in Part IX., pp. 284—292, with incidental notice of her two sons, Beppe and Angelo.)		
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There are incidental, and very interesting references to other people in nearly
every page of Francesca's letters, but there is no need of index to them ;
part of their charm being in their affectionate association with parts of the
more consistently written stories.

Tu sapesti il che, il come,
Avea DIO da farsi uomo.
Ti dotò di tante dote,
Nella tua concezione.

Dio mandò l'ambasciatore,
Gabrielle con splendore:
Eri in camera serrata,
Quando fece l'imbasciata.

E di grazia ti disse piena,
Sei del Ciel fatta Regina!
Il Signore già è con tia:
DIO ti salvi a te MARIA!

Nel vederti salutata,
Nel interno eri turbata.
Maria, levati ogni pianto;
Ciò è per opera dello Spirito Santo.

Tu sarai Vergine e Madre,
Per la tua grande umiltade.
Benedetto ne sia il frutto,
Redentor del mondo tutto.

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Thou didst know that God one day
Would put on our mortal clay ;
Unto thee, in Earth or Heaven,
Only, such a grace was given.

God to thee His angel sent,
Gabriel with the message went.
Thou wast in thy room alone,
When he made his errand known.

Full of grace ! did Gabriel say,
Queen of Heaven thou art to-day !
God shall ever with thee be ;
Blessèd Mary, hail to thee !

As his speech did thus begin,
Troubled was thy soul within.
Mary, cast away thy fear,
God it is who sent me here.

Virgin Mother shalt thou be,
For thy great humility :
To a Son thou shalt give birth,
Who will ransom all the earth.

Allora subito umiliata,
Acconsentisti all' imbasciata.
Son l'ancella del Signore ;
Venga, venga il Redentore !

Di là a tempo tu partisti,
Collo Sposo te ne gisti ;
Camminando a Bettemme,
E passaste tante pene.

Non poteste allor trovare,
Da potervi alloggiare,
Che una grotta alla strania. . . .
Come facesti, Signora mia ?

Oh, che povero ricetto !
Senza fuoco, senza letto.
Credo ancora che la grotta
Era bagnata e poco asciutta.

A mezza notte partoristi :
Senza dolore lo facisti,
Questo Figlio inzuccherato
Tanto al mondo desiato !

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THESE songs and hymns of the poor people have been collected, little by little, in the course of a great many years which I have passed in constant intercourse with the Tuscan contadini. They are but the *siftings*, so to say, of hundreds and hundreds which I have heard and learnt, mostly from old people: many of them have never, so far as I know, been written down before, and others it would be impossible now to find. A great many were taught me by the celebrated improvisatrice, Beatrice Bernardi of Pian degli Ontani, whose portrait I have placed in the beginning of the book,—one of the most wonderful women whom I ever knew. This Beatrice was the daughter of a stonemason at Melo, a little village of not very easy access on the mountain side above Cutigliano; and her mother having died in Beatrice's infancy, she became, from early childhood, the companion and

Thou in humble worship bent,
To the message didst consent.
I, God's handmaid, wait His will:
Let Him all thy words fulfil.

When the destined time had come,
Lady, thou didst leave thy home;
Thou and Joseph, with much pain,
Did the town of Bethlehem gain.

There no shelter couldst thou find,
House, or roof of any kind:
To a cave thou didst repair
Lady dear, what didst thou there?

What a place to pass the night!
Without bed, or fire, or light.
On the ground thou didst abide;
Damp it was, and cold beside.

In this lodging so forlorn,
Just at midnight He was born;
This sweet child, whose wondrous birth,
Long was waited for on earth.

assistant of her father, accompanying him to his winter labours in the Maremma, and, as she grew larger, helping him at his work by bringing him stones for the walls and bridges which he built, carrying them balanced on her head. *She had no education in the common sense of the word, never learning even the alphabet,** but she had a wonderful memory, and could sing or recite long pieces of poetry. As a girl, she used in summer to follow the sheep, with her distaff at her waist; and would fill up her hours of solitude by singing such ballads as “The war of St. Michael and the dragon! The creation of the world!! and the Fall of man!!!” or “The history of San Pellegrino, son of Romano, King of Scotland”; and now, in her old age, she knows nearly all the New Testament history, and much of the Old, in poetical form. She was very beautiful then, they say, with curling hair, and wonderful inspired looking eyes, and there must always have been a great charm in her voice and smile; so it is no great wonder that Matteo Bernardi, much older than herself, and owner of a fine farm at Pian degli Ontani, and of many cattle, chose rather to marry the shepherd girl who could sing so sweetly,

* Italics mine. Compare Fors on education, No. 94.

Riverente l'adorasti,
Ed in panni l'infasciasti.
Lo mettesti, Signora, poi,
In mezzo l'asino e lo buoi.

Una sola mangiatoia
N'è lo ver, bella Signora?
Oh, che notte d'allegrezza!
Tutto gaudio e contentezza!

Fu la notte risplendente,
Che stupì tutta la gente.
Nacque Cristo in sulla terra,
Mise pace, e levò guerra.

Li pastori l'adorarono,
Li presenti gli portarono;
E dicevan per la via,
È già nato il gran Messia.

Ora tu, Signora mia,
Che sei piena di cortesia,
Mostramelo, per favore,
Lo tuo Figlio, il Redentore.

than another woman whom his family liked better, and who might perhaps have brought him more share of worldly prosperity. On Beatrice's wedding day, according to the old custom of the country, one or two poets improvised verses suitable to the occasion, and as she listened to them, suddenly she felt in herself a new power, and began to sing the poetry which was then born in her mind, and having once begun, found it impossible to stop, and kept on singing a great while; so that all were astonished, and her uncle, who was present, said, "Beatrice, you have deceived me! If I had known what you were, I would have put you in a convent." From that time forth she was the great poetess of all that part of the country, and was sent for to sing and recite at weddings and other festivals for many miles around; and perhaps she might have been happy; but her husband's sister, Barbara, who lived in the house, and who had not approved of the marriage, tried very wickedly to set her brother against his wife, and to some extent succeeded. He tried to stop her singing, which seemed to him a sort of madness, and at times he treated her with great unkindness: but sing she must, and sing she did, for it was what the Lord made her for: and she lived

Thou didst worship, while thy hands
Wrapped Him in those linen bands:
Then didst place Him on the hay,
'Twixt the ox and ass He lay.

In the manger! Lady fair,
Was it not as I declare?
Such a night of joy serene,
Ne'er before on earth was seen.

For at midnight shone such light,
All men wondered at the sight.
Christ is born, and war departs,
Peace He gives to all our hearts.

Shepherds, hastening to adore,
While their humble gifts they bore,
Said to all along the way,
Christ the Lord is born to-day.

Now, my Lady, kind of heart
Full of courtesy thou art
Pray thee, let me look upon
My Redeemer, thy dear Son.

down all their dislike; her husband loved her in his old age; and Barbara, whom she nursed with motherly kindness through a long and distressing illness, was her friend before she died. Beatrice is still living, at a great age now, but still retaining much of her old beauty and brilliancy, and is waited on and cared for with much affection by a pretty grand-daughter bearing the same name as herself.

As for the other songs, I have explained in the notes which I have written under them all the little that I know about them. The tunes, with the exception of those which I found printed in the *Corona di Sacre Canzoni*, I learned from the poor people themselves, and wrote down as well as I could. Most of them (though they sound very sweet to me, bringing back the very feeling of the air in the fir-woods, or on the farms, where I have been used to hear them) are nothing more than plaintive monotonous little chants; but a few of the airs are very pretty; the accompaniments have been nearly all composed by Signora Sestilia Poggiali. The pictures sufficiently explain themselves; they are likenesses, nearly all, of the country people in their every day clothes and with their every day surround-

Madonna.

Datemi, oh caro sposo,
Lo mio Figlio grazioso ;
Quando vide sta meschina,
Zingarella ch'indovina.

Questo, sorella, è lo tuo DIO,
Ch'è lo cuore e lo stato mio.
Guarda bene sto bel viso ;
Allegrezza di Paradiso.

ings; while as to the ornamenting of the pages, it seemed natural that road-side songs should have borders of road-side flowers. Of the four long ballads, the "Madonna and the Gipsy," "St. Christopher," "St. Zita," and "The Samaritan," I have put in only one, the Samaritan, at full length, and of St. Christopher I have left out all the last half, which describes his preaching and his martyrdom, both because it was so very long, and because the details were so painful. Already the old songs are fast being forgotten; many of them it would be impossible now to find, and others are sung only by a few aged people who will soon be gone, or in some remote corners of the mountains; and in a few years they will probably be heard no more. They have served their time, and many people laugh at them now, and some have told me that I should have done better to spend my time and work on something more valuable; but in their day they have been a comfort to many. Labouring people have sung them at their work, and have felt their burdens lightened; they have brightened the long winter evenings of the poor women in lonely houses high among the mountains, when they have been sitting over their fires of fir-branches, with their children

Madonna.

Pray thee, husband, give me here,
From thine arms my infant dear ;
When the gipsy shall him view,
She may tell his fortune too.

Here thy GOD, my sister, see :
Heart, and soul, and life to me !
Look on this sweet face with care ;
All of Heaven's joy lies there.

I defer the closing portion of the ballad, that it may be read in association with the lovely drawings illustrating it, which, with that of the Madonna entering the Gipsy's hut, in the present number, are to my mind the most joyful, because most credible, sacred designs I ever yet saw. They are beautifully rendered by the photographs: the three originals are all given to Oxford: that of the Jessamine Window, with its pretty lesson in window-gardening, to Sheffield.

about them, shut in by the snows outside, and with their men all away in the Maremma: and I have known those who have been helped to bear sickness and trouble, and even to meet death itself, with more courage, by verses of the simple old hymns. I have heard Beato Leonardo's "Hymn to the Cross" sung in chorus by a party of pilgrims, men and women together, going to the mountain of San Pellegrino on a still moonlight night in August, when it has sounded to me as sweet as anything that ever I heard. It seems to me that there are others who will collect and preserve the thoughts of the rich and great; but I have wished to make my book all of poor people's poetry, and who knows but it may contain a word of help or consolation for some poor soul yet? However that may be, I have done my best to save a little of what is passing away.

FRANCESCA ALEXANDER.

FLORENCE, PIAZZA SANTA MARIA NOVELLA,

December 25th, 1882.

THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

BRANTWOOD, *Jan. 1st*, 1884.

OF the circumstances under which this work came into my possession, account is given in my report to the St. George's Guild for the year 1883; it has been since a matter of much debate with me how to present it most serviceably to those whom it is calculated to serve; and what I am about to do with it, though the best I can think of, needs both explanation and apology at some length.

The book consists of 109 folio leaves, on every one of which there is a drawing, either of figures, or flowers, or both. To photograph all, would of course put the publication entirely out of the reach of people of moderate means; while to print at once the text of the songs and music, without the illustrations, would have deprived them of what to my mind is their *necessary* interpretation; they could not be in what

is best of them understood,—even a little understood,—without the pictures of the people who love them. I have determined therefore to photograph, for the present, twenty of the principal illustrations, and to print, together with them, so much of the text as immediately relates to their subjects, adding any further elucidation of them which may be in my own power. But as soon as I have got this principal part of the book well in course of issue, I will print separately all the music, and the little short songs called Rispetti, in their native Italian, and Francesca's English. Meantime, I have presented to Oxford the twelve principal drawings of those which will be published in photograph, and four others to the St. George's Museum at Sheffield. Twenty-five of the leaves of text, illustrated with flowers only, are placed at Oxford for temporary use and examination. These, as well as the greater part of the remainder of the volume, will be distributed between my schools at Oxford, Girton College at Cambridge, the St. George's Museum, and Whitelands College at Chelsea, as soon as I have prepared the text for publication, but this work of course necessitates for some time the stay of the drawings beside me.

They are admirably, in most cases, represented by



God his Father is, and he
 Like to **God** in majesty,
 Yet like man, and child of man
 By his courtesy living.



Figlio è dell' eterno **Padre**
 Come **Dio** di maestade,
 E come nome, e figlio mio
 Per sua mera cortesia.

Mr. Hollyer's photographs: one or two only of the more highly finished ones necessarily become a little dark, and in places lose their clearness of line, but, as a whole, they are quite wonderful in fidelity and clearness of representation. Of the drawings themselves I will leave the reader to form his own estimate; merely praying him to observe that Miss Alexander's attention is always fixed primarily on expression, and on the accessory circumstances which enforce it; that in order to let the parts of the design on which its sentiment depends be naturally seen and easily felt, she does not allow any artifices of composition, or charms of light and shade, which would disturb the simplicity of her appeal to the feelings; and that in this restriction, observed through many years, she has partly lost, herself, the sense of light and shade, and sees everything in local colour only: other faults there are, of which, however, be they in the reader's estimate few or many, he may be assured that none are of the least weight in comparison with the virtues of the work; and farther, that they ought to be all to him inoffensive faults, because they are not caused either by affectation, indolence, or egoism. All fatal faults in art that might have been otherwise

good, arise from one or other of these three things,—either from the pretence to feel what we do not,—the indolence in exercises necessary to obtain the power of expressing the truth,—or the presumptuous insistence upon, and indulgence in, our own powers and delights, because they are ours, and with no care or wish that they should be useful to other people, so only they be admired by them. From all these sources of guilty error Miss Alexander's work is absolutely free. It is sincere and true as the sunshine; industrious, with an energy as steady as that by which a plant grows in spring; modest and unselfish, as ever was good servant's work for a beloved Master.

In its relation to former religious art of the same faithfulness, it is distinguished by the faculty and habit of realization which belongs to all Pre-Raphaelism, whether English or American; that is to say, it represents any imagined event as far as possible in the way it must have happened, and as it looked, when happening, to people who did not then know its Divine import; but with this further distinction from our English school of Pre-Raphaelism, that Miss Alexander represents everything as it would have happened in Tuscany to Tuscan peasants, while our

English Pre-Raphaelites never had the boldness to conceive Christ or His mother as they would have looked, with English faces, camping on Hampstead Heath, or confused among a crowd in the Strand: and therefore, never brought the vision of them close home to the living English heart, as Francesca is able to show the face of her Lord to the hill peasants at the well of l'Abetone.* The London artists may answer with justice, that the actual life of l'Abetone is like that of Palestine; but that London life is not: to whom it may be again answered, and finally, that they have no business whatever to live in London, and that no noble art will ever be there possible. But Francesca's method of using the materials round her, be it noted, is also wholly different from theirs. They, either for convenience, fancy, or feelings' sake, use, for their types of saint or heroine, the model who happens that day to be disengaged, or the person in whom they themselves take an admiring or affectionate interest. The first heard organ-grinder of the morning, hastily silenced, is hired for St. Jerome, and

* Christ and the Woman of Samaria (at Oxford). See close of the notice of Lucia, at p. 22 below.

THE MADONNA AND THE GIPSY.

St. Catherine or the Madonna represented by the pretty acquaintance, or the amiable wife. But Francesca, knowing the histories, and versed in the ways of the people round her for many a year, chooses for the type of every personage in her imagined picture, some one whose circumstances and habitual tone of mind are actually like those related and described in the legend to be illustrated. The servant saint, Zita of Lucca, is represented by a perfectly dutiful and happy farm-servant, who has in reality worked all her life without wages; and the gipsy who receives the forlorn Madonna in Egypt, is drawn from a woman of gipsy blood who actually *did* receive a wounded boy, supposed to be at the point of death, into her house, when all the other women in the village held back; and nursed him, and healed him.

Perceiving this to be Miss Alexander's constant method of design, and that, therefore, the historic candour of the drawings was not less than their religious fervour, I asked her to furnish me, for what use I might be able to make of them, with such particulars as she knew, or might with little pains remember, of the real lives and characters of the peasants whom she had taken for her principal models. The request was fortunate; since in

LA MADONNA E LA ZINGARELLA.

FIGLIO è dell' eterno Padre
Come DIO di maestade
E come uomo, e figlio mio,
Per sua mera cortesia.

Ecco sorella, il Redentore ;
Venne qua pel peccatore.
Pate Lui, pato io,
E sto caro sposo mio

Zingarella.

Oh che Figlio inzuccherato !
Il mio cuore ha innamorato,
Signora ed Imperatrice,
Benche sono peccatrice !

a very few weeks after it had been presented, Miss Alexander sent me a little white book stamped with the red Florentine lily, containing, in the prettiest conceivable manuscript, a series of biographic sketches, which are to me, in some ways, more valuable than the book which they illustrate ; or rather, form now an essential part of, without which many of its highest qualities and gravest lessons must have remained unacknowledged and unaccepted.

I take upon myself therefore, unhesitatingly, what blame the reader may think my due, for communicating to him the substance of these letters, without reserve. I print them, in Francesca's own colloquial, or frankly epistolary, terms, as the best interpretation of the legends revived for us by her, in these breathing images of existent human souls.

Of the literary value of the songs themselves, it is not necessary for me to express any opinion, since Miss Alexander claims for them only the interest of having been practically useful to the persons for whom they were composed ; and, in her translation, aims only at rendering their meaning clear with a pleasant musical order and propriety of cadence.

But it is a point deserving of some attentive notice,

THE MADONNA AND THE GIPSY.

(Continuation of the song from the previous number.)

God His Father is, and He
Like to God in majesty.
Yet like man, and child of mine,
By His courtesy divine.

The Redeemer from above
Come to earth for sinners' love!
Much to suffer here, and we
Shall with Him afflicted be.

Gipsy.

Oh, but what a babe divine!
Lady, all this heart of mine
Burns with love as Him I see:
Sinful creature though I be!

that this extremely simple and unexcited manner of verse, common to both the ballads and their translations, results primarily from the songs being intended for, and received as, the relation of actual facts necessary to be truly known; and not at all as the expression of sentiment, fancy, or imagination.

And they correspond in this function, and in their resultant manner, very closely to early Greek ballad in the lays of Orpheus and Hesiod,—and indeed to Greek epic verse altogether, in that such song is only concerned with the visible works and days of gods and men; and will neither stoop, nor pause, to take colour from the singer's personal feelings. I received a new lesson myself only a day or two since, respecting the character of that early Greek verse, from a book I was re-reading after twelve years keeping it by me to re-read,—Emile Boutmy's '*Philosophie de l'Architecture en Grèce*,'—in which (p. 121) is this notable sentence. "*L'un des traits les plus frappants de la phrase homérique, c'est que l'omission et le sous-entendu y sont sans exemple. Je ne crois pas qu'on puisse signaler dans l'Iliade ou dans l'Odyssée une ellipse, ou une enthymème.*" But the difference between explicit and undisturbed narrative or statement of emotion, in this

Il suo nome è Gesù;
Chi non l' ama non sa più.
Vi domando perdonanza:
Peccator, quest' è l' usanza.

Buona sorte fu la mia,
D' incontrarvi per la Via.
Mi parlava ognor il cuore,
Mi diceva, Esci fuori!

Già che DIO così destina
Ch' io faccia l' indovina,
Fammi grazia, Signorino,
Dammi qua lo tuo Manino.

Io non faccio ste parole,
Me le pico dallo cuore:
Bella Madre di clemenza,
Preparatevi a penitenza.

Passati alcuni anni,
Gesù dirà a San Giovanni,
Voglio essere nel Giordano,
Battezzato di tua mano.

kind, and the continual hinting, suggesting, mystifying, and magnifying, of recent pathetic poetry, (and I believe also of Gothic as opposed to Greek or pure Latin poetry,) requires more thought, and above all, more illustration, than I have time at present to give; and I am content to leave the verses preserved in this book to please whom they may please, without insisting upon any reasons why they should; and for myself, satisfied in my often reiterated law of right work, that it is the expression of true pleasure in right things—and thankful that, much though I love my Byron, the lives of Saints may be made vivid enough to me by less vigorous verses than are necessary to adorn the biography of Corsairs and Giaours.





Naught I invent or make.
 From my heart the words I take.
 Oh, prepare thee, Mother dear,
 Sad and fearful things to hear!

When some years have passed away,
 Jesus to Saint John will say,
 In the Jordan's stream, by thee,
 Will I now baptiz'd be.



Io non faccio ste parole,
 Me le pico dallo cuore:
 Bella Madre di clemenza,
 Preparati a penitenza.

Passati alcuni anni,
 Gesù dirà a San Giovanni,
 Voglio essere nel Giordano,
 Battizzato di tua mano.



Io non posso più parlare
 di te più a lungo
 Bello, bello, bello
 P. ...

...
 ...
 ...
 ...
 ...



A pilgrim poor to Zita came one day,
All faint and thirsty with the summer heat,
And for a little water but her pray—
Till he was beside the well they came to meet.
She feared to give it, yet what could she say?
She craved him kindly, and with words sweet:
I wish, my brother, I could give thee wine;
But if the winter please thee, that is thine.

This said she, then some water from the well,
And with a cross the pitcher hid she veiled.
Oh Lord, she said, a tale to thee sa set voice fell.
Let not this water hurt him, he is thine.
The pilgrim, who needed to drink, could tell
Her the night before she spoke, for in it were wine.
He tasted, then, astonished, inwardly said:
But truly this is precious wine! he said.

Accostandosi a Zita un pellegrino,
Che per il caldo lui ardea sete ardente.
Ognun di lor al pozzo era vicino,
E Zita che dell'acqua ne traeva.
Chiedendole se lei vuol porgerle,
Ed umilmente Zita rispondeva:
Aspetta, fratello mio, la ve a carere,
Perche' del vino non ti posso dare.

Volgendo Zita l'orazione a Dio
Ne sopra l'acqua il segno della Croce:
Che fosse vino anzi, meglio deno,
Disse, bevelo, a lui cop'essa voce.
Quando Zita disse, Suprae mio,
Fate quest'acqua, al pozzo non nasce!
Così cominciò a ber quel pellegrino:
Gustando vino, E prezioso vino!

SANTA ZITA.
The Miracle at the Well.

Jesus is His name ; their lot
Darkness is, who love Him not.
At His feet shall sinners bow,
Evermore, as I do now.

Happy fate was mine to-day
Thus to meet Thee in the way !
Go ! the heart said in my breast :
Go out ! And I could not rest.

Since the good God destined me
Fortune-teller thus to be,
Do not, Lord, my prayer decline,
Lay Thy little hand in mine.

Naught do I invent or make,
From my heart the words I take.
Oh, prepare thee, Mother dear,
Sad and fearful things to hear !

When some years have passed away,
Jesus to Saint John will say,
In the Jordan's stream, by thee,
Will I now baptizèd be.

Ed ancora credo per certo,
Che anderà nel deserto,
A digiunare del continuo,
Senza pane e senza vino.

Comparsogli l' arso cane,
Vorrà far delle pietre pane;
Ma sarà precipitato,
Per virtù di DIO umanato.

Anderà in Gerusalemme,
Con gli apostoli insieme.
Entrerà fra rami e palmi,
Canteranno inni e salmi.

Poi anderà il Signore,
Nel Cenacolo con amore;
E gli apostoli inviterà,
Con infinita carità.

Piglierà nelle sue mane,
E consacrerà il pane;
E dirà lo stesso DIO,
Questo è il corpo mio.

ROADSIDE SONGS OF TUSCANY.



INTRODUCTORY.

THE STORY OF LUCIA.

IN reading the legends of the saints, the reader who cares for the truth that remains in them must always observe first, whether the saint is only a symbolic one, like St. Sophia and St. Catherine; or a real one, like St. Genevieve and St. Benedict. In the second place, if they are real people, he must observe whether the miracles are done *by* them, or *for* them. Legends of consciously active miracles are rare: the modesty of the great saints prevents them from attempting such, and all the loveliest and best witnessed stories are of miracles done for them or through their ministry, often without their knowledge,—like the shining of Moses' face, or the robing of St. Martin by the angels ('Bible of Amiens,' chap. i.).

Now Santa Zita, "St. Maid," was a real, living, hard-worked maid-servant, in the town you still know as a great oil mart, in the 13th century. As real a person as

After that, for many a day,
In the desert He will stay.
Fasting, in that place of dread,
Tasting neither wine nor bread.

Satan there will Him persuade,
Stones he would to bread were made.
But will shortly, by God's might,
Be confused and put to flight.

Christ shall enter through the gate
Of Jerusalem in state.
Boughs of palm His followers bring,
Hymns and psalms of praise they sing,

Later, He, the Lord of all,
Will the twelve apostles call,
All for love and mercy's sake,
His last supper to partake.

And, while all in reverence wait,
He the bread shall consecrate.
This, shall say the Lord of Heaven,
Is My body, for you given.

your own kitchen-maid, and not a bit better, probably, than yours is, if she's a good one;—only, living in the most vital and powerful days of Christianity, she was made to feel and know many things which your kitchen-maid can never feel, nor even hear of; and therefore, having also extremely fine intellect as well as heart, she became a very notable creature indeed, and one of wide practical power throughout Europe; for though she lived and died a servant of all work at a clothier's,—thirty years after her death, Dante acknowledges her the patron saint of her city: and she has ever since been the type of perfectness in servant life, to the Christian world.

More of her—indeed, all that is truly known of her—you shall hear in the next number of this book: I have here only to observe to you, that this, her principal active miracle during life, done at the well, is done unconsciously, and by her customary and natural prayer,—answered only, this time, in an unexpected manner.

Of such prayer, and its possible answer, we will think further after reading all her legendary history: but in the meantime, you must hear the quite plain and indisputable story of the girl who is drawn to represent her in Francesca's picture: which Francesca herself tells us, as follows:—

We come now to Sta. Zita, of whom the original is Lucia Santi, a young married woman of “Le Motte,” a place so named on account of the frequent land-

Dello calice il vino
Muterà in sangue divino.
O gran portento d' amore,
Che farà sto gran Signore.

Fatto già lo sacramento,
Non averà più evento :
D' amore sarà infiammato,
Per salvare l' uomo ingrato.

Poi anderà con devozione,
Nell' orto a far orazione.
E lasciata la compagnia,
Patirà la grand' agonia.

Giuda poi delle orazioni,
Ci anderà con finzioni ;
E col bacio lo tradirà,
Per trenta denari lo venderà.

I giudei l' attaccheranno,
E legato lo meneranno,
Come avesse fatto male,
Di tribunale in tribunale.

slides which take place in the neighbourhood. I always wonder why any one ever built the house in which she lives, which is in the very bed of a rocky stream, at the bottom of a ravine so narrow that one often does not see the house at all until he finds himself on the edge of the precipice, looking down on the roof of grey slate which covers the whole irregular group of buildings, on the threshing-floor, the haystacks, and, what there is hardly any need to mention, the cherry trees. It was not built there for want of any other place, for the Santi family are rich contadini, and own quite a large extent of beautiful hilly country. Lucia, as her picture shows, is more very sweet looking than very pretty. Though she *is* pretty, too, with her bright black eyes, always ready to brighten into a smile, and her dimples, and her shining white teeth, which look all the whiter contrasted with her brown skin. She lives on the Modenese side of the confine, (for I ought to have said before that l'Abetone is just on the border where the two states join,) so the people on the Tuscan side call her "Lombarda," and regard her with no very friendly eyes. It is strange what a mortal dislike there is between the Tuscans on the confine, and their Modenese, or, as they call them, *Lombard* neighbours. People living not a mile apart speak of each other as foreigners, and the stories that each nationality tells about the other are enough to frighten one. I

By a word of power, the wine
Will be changed to Blood divine.
Ne'er did earth such wonders view,
As His mighty love shall do !

When the Sacrament is past,
(Of His earthly acts the last,)
Love will Him constrain, to give
All His life, that man may live.

Rising, thence He makes His way
To a garden, there to pray :
Bowed with grief, from all apart,
With great anguish in His heart.

On that night of sore dismay,
Judas shall his Lord betray ;
And of silver shall but win
Thirty pieces for such sin !

Then the Jews shall Him surround ;
They, alas ! will lead Him bound,
To tribunals more than one,
As though evil He had done !

remember at one time there was a priest at the Abetone church who came from Fiumalbo, five miles off, and he seemed to be a very good man; but when I tried to induce an Abetone girl to go to his church, and hear him explain the gospel, as he was in the habit of doing on Sunday morning, she replied, in a tone of mingled contempt and bitterness, that she could not see the use of going to church to hear "*that Lombard!*"

But the mountain people have a great faculty of glorifying their own particular little corners, however small, and despising the rest of the world. What the Italians call the *patriotism of the campanile*. I remember once when Pellegrino Seghi, the singer, brought us a present of a fine trout which he had caught in the Lima, he gave it to me with the remark that we should find it *quite different* from the trout of the Sestaione. Though what the difference consisted in, or why there should be any rivalry between the inhabitants of two beautiful valleys four miles apart, I could never understand.

But to return to Lucia; she is married to the second son of old Santi, the rich contadino; and she and her husband, and the other son and his wife, and the two children, live with the old people. The father, of course, is absolute master, and I am afraid sometimes he is rather a hard master to poor Lucia. She is a gentle, willing creature, but not very large or strong, and

Dallo guideo Pilato,
Sarà infino condannato.
Grideranno ad alta voce,
Porti Cristo la sua Croce!

Questo figlio inzuccherato,
Tu lo vedrai ammazzato ;
Sopra d' una dura croce,
Figlio bello, Figlio dolce!

Che dolore sentirai,
Quando in braccio l' averai,
Morto, tutto insanguinato,
Il suo corpo scorticato!

Con gran lacrime e sospiri,
Lo porterai a seppellire,
Dentro un nuovo monumento,
Per tuo ultimo tormento.

Dunque Madre sconsolata
Facci sempre l' avvocatà,
Tu sei Figlia di Dio Padre,
Di suo Figlio sei la Madre.

they literally "load and drive her" in a way that I should think cruel towards any beast of burden. It is enough to try any one's patience to see that poor Lucia walking down the steep road to the mill, two miles away, bent almost double under the weight of an immense sack of grain, stopping now and then to sit down and rest on a stone by the road-side, and when she has recovered her breath, creeping laboriously on again; and I do think sometimes that her father-in-law might let her take the mule; but he never thinks of it, and really, I do not think she ever thinks of it either. Long before daylight she must be about the farm work; sometimes as early as three o'clock, when there is mowing or reaping to be done. For all this she receives a poor living, and nothing else; she is simply an unpaid, overworked farm servant. She dresses in the coarse cloth which she and the other two women spin and weave from the wool of their own sheep. I must say that they have a wonderful taste in the making up and trimming of pretty fanciful aprons, which they weave with bright stripes of all sorts of colours, and make curious little pockets in. And the linen is bought of other contadini, who raise and spin flax, and exchange it for the wool of Le Motte. So Lucia is clothed without spending money. Her head-dress, the only thing wanting, is supplied in a curious way. Once every two years a man travels through those mountains, buying up

By unwilling Pilate, He
Sentenced, at the last, shall be ;
To content the Jews, who cry,
Let Him bear His cross and die !

This sweet Babe, all prayers in vain,
Must before thine eyes be slain.
On a cross thou shalt Him see . . .
Oh dear Child ! and must this be ?

Till that day of torment past,
Dead and white and still at last,
In thy arms, with tears and pain,
They will lay thy Child again.

With what tears and bitter sighs,
Thou shalt hide Him from thine eyes,
In a tomb which one shall lend . . .
And with this thy woes shall end.

Listen, Mother full of grief,
Pray for our poor souls' relief !
God thy Father was, and thou
Of His Son art Mother now.

the hair of the women and girls. Lucia has beautiful coal-black hair, as fine as silk, and she sells it to him for a cotton handkerchief, worth (possibly) a franc! He probably sells that hair for thirty or forty francs. I told her that I thought she made a bad bargain, and she answered with her usual bright smile, "I can go to church without my hair, but I cannot go without my handkerchief." She is exceedingly fond of hearing songs or stories, and took a particular fancy to the ballad of the Samaritan woman, which I used to sing to her. The story of how our Lord met that woman when she went to the well for water took a great hold of her imagination, because she was in the habit of going to the well every day herself. About that time a pedlar came along who sold little books and coarse lithographs of sacred subjects, and we bought a good many and gave them to the neighbours. Lucia could not read, so the books were of no use to her, but we gave her her choice of the lithographs, and she chose a head of our Lord. When it was in her hands, she kissed it many times over with great devotion, and then said to me, her eyes shining very brightly, as they always did when any very bright thought came into her mind,—

"I wish He would meet me some day; I know what I would say to Him!"

"What would you say to Him?" I asked her; and

Sposa sei dello Spirito Santo,
Non puoi tu aver già vanto?
Sei arrivata a tanti onori
Per noi altri peccatori.

Non ti vo' più infastidire,
Bello Signora, sai ch'hai fare . .
Dona la limosinella
A sta povera Zingarella.

Non voglio oro, nè denari;
Benchè me ne potrai dare.
Tu sei Stella rilucente,
Hai con te Christo Omnipotente.

Vo' una vera contrizione,
Per la tua intercessione,
Acciò st' alma, dopo morte,
Tragga alle celesti porte.

FINE DELLA MADONNA E LA ZINGARELLA.

she, much excited, and apparently thinking such a meeting by no means improbable, answered,—

“I would ask Him to take me with him.”

“But,” I said, “would you not be sorry to leave the baby?”

“Perhaps,” she answered, “He would let me take the baby too.”

I asked her then if she would not be sorry to leave her husband; and she grew more sober, and thought about it for a minute: then she said,—

“I *should* be a little sorry to leave him, but he is a young man, and would soon find another wife. If he were an old man, then it would be different, and I would not leave him. But I should so like to go away with the Lord Jesus!”

“And is this all of the first story?”

This is all; and I am no less sorry than you there is no more:—yet, here, short and uneventful as it is, you have the record of a whole life, and of its love, such love as was allowed to it. Is the reader shocked at Lucia's readiness to leave her husband, if only he did not miss her too much, for another Love? Have we here the proved mischief of religious enthusiasm, thinks he, making us despise our earthly duties?

Not so; look on it with what Protestant and practical

Thou the Holy Spirit's bride,
O'er all creatures glorified.
And thou wast so glorious made,
For our comfort and our aid.

'Tis enough, thou weary art,
Lady, but before we part,
Unto this poor gipsy, pray
Give an alms, if ask I may.

Silver ask I not, nor gold ;
Though all wealth thy hand doth hold
Star of light ! For on 'thy breast
Christ, th' omnipotent, doth rest.

Grant me, by thy prayers, to win
True repentance for my sin :
That my soul may, soon or late,
Enter through the heavenly gate.

mind you may. Lucia's 'desire to depart and be with Christ' is in no wise enthusiastic,—nay, in this vivid phase it is only momentary, and a new idea to her,—the consequence of Francesca's singing the Ballad of the Samaritana, and of the happy possession of the gay lithograph. It had not been in the least a part of her life, before,—no manner of discontent nor desire had defiled that life—or exalted. Her mind, so far as I can read it, is, in its nobleness of submission, like that of a graceful and loyal animal of burden. I have just been teaching the children at our village school, Bloomfield's verses about his 'Bayard.'

Ready, as birds to meet the morn,
Were all his efforts at the plough ;
Then, the millbrook, with hay or corn,
Good creature, how he'd spatter through !

I left him in the shafts behind,
His fellows all unhooked and gone ;
He neighed, and deemed the thing unkind,
Then, starting, drew the load alone.

And compare my own notes on the Serf horse of the railway station.* Like minded, in many respects, is poor Lucia,—and, in such likeness, far more to be revered than pitied.

Neither, in the slight hold which her heart takes of her

* I forget where ; but will give reference in next number, having a word or two more to say about it, here irrelevant.

NOTES UPON GIPSY* CHARACTER.

ANY historian acutely studious of national character, who, fifty years hence, may undertake to give account of the spirit of British legal enactment in this—especially seeking after righteousness—epoch and generation, cannot fail to be greatly struck, and no less edified, by the indignation of all philosophers, magnates, and magistrates against the entirely disreputable, red-cloaked vagabond who has cheated the kitchen-maid out of, say three half-crowns, or in gross cases, half a sovereign, under the monstrous pretence of *telling* her fortune; while no indignation of scathing or scornful quality is ever expressed by any magisterial person against the well-dressed and entirely reputable vagabond, who, at the same instant, in the parlour, may be cheating her master out of all he has in the world, under the quite rational and amiable pretence of *making* his!

Curious, in their measure of human crime, these

* I keep Johnson's and Scott's spelling, as the more familiar English form, rather than Francesca's more graceful 'Gypsy,' which seems too distinctly to infer their now disproved origin.

domestic state, is she to be thought of with blame. Do not think, refined lady-love of happy husband, that she is incapable of happiness like yours; neither think *you*, passionate lady-love of poet lover, that she is incapable of your yearning, or distress. But—first of all things—she has been taught alike to forget herself, and subdue herself; she is a part of the, often cruel, always mysterious, order of the Universe; resigned to it without a murmur—without a reproach—without a prayer—except that her strength may be as her day: an absolutely dutiful, absolutely innocent, unflinchingly brave and useful creature;—while you, most of you, my lady friends, are flirting and pouting and mewing—as if the entire world had been made for you, and, by you, only to be pouted at, played with, or despised. I heard of a rich and well educated girl, but the other day, sick, no one of her people guessed why,—nor she neither, poor girl; but she was falling into a dangerous and fixed melancholy, simply for want of something to do. To have embroidered a handkerchief for Lucia, and sent it her, for once, without cutting her hair off in exchange, would have been singularly medicinal to the invalid.

For the rest,—Lucia is really a great deal prettier than she looks at the well-side; for Francesca had to bring her down to Santa Zita's level in that particular, and there is no record that Santa Zita was the least pretty, or had any distinction whatever above other girls, except her perfect usefulness and peace of heart.

judicial minds are still more remarkable in their estimate of human intellect. The poor servant-maid who has hoped that in the stars above might be read, by the stained wanderer's dark eyes, some twinkling sentence of her narrow destiny, is below contempt, forsooth, in the minds of persons who believe, on the delicatest suggestion of Mr. Tiggs and the Board, that it is the placid purpose of Heaven, through its rolling years for evermore, to pay them forty per cent. on their unpaid-up capital, for smoking their cigars and picking their teeth.

In observable relation to these various states of masterly and servile mind, this acute historian of the future will, I doubt not, signalize the constantly indignant use of the word 'Impostor' by the classes who will be then seen to have been themselves impostors on the largest and hollowest scale hitherto admired under the sky; and the similarly indignant use of the word 'Despot' by the nation which, of all others, has the most dexterous habit of domineering.

And it seems to me that, as compared with either of these two states of mind, or divisions of men, the Gipsy temper is by far honester than the one, and wiser than the other.

To my thinking, he is, in the first place, quite the least of impostors now abroad. He proclaims to you, by his, or her, to both convenient, not immodest, not insolent, dress, that he belongs to an outcast tribe, yet patient of your rejection—unvindictive—ready always

to give you good words and pleasant hopes for half a crown, and sound tinkering of pot or kettle for less money. He wears no big wigs—no white ties; his kingship is crownless, his shepherding unmitred; he pins on his rough cloak no false astrology of honour. Of your parliamentary machineries, are any a Gipsy's job?—of your cunningly devised shoddies, any a Gipsy's manufacture? Not against the Gipsy's blow you ironclad yourself;—not by the Gipsy's usury do your children starve. Honestest, harmlessest of the human race—under whose roof *but* a Gipsy's may a wandering Madonna rest in peace?

Nor in less strange and admirable distinction from the herd of unthinking men, does the Gipsy stand to me, in his acute, perseverant, uncontentious extrication of himself from the fetter, or the snare, of every physical and moral despotism, justly so called: and in his love and true attainment of liberty of soul and body in all the meanings and privileges of liberty that are rational and guiltless. He is imprisoned neither in mansion, nor in money-chest; his paternal acres are by every roadside; he owes neither duty to tenant, nor rent to lord; he is enslaved by no creed—attached to no party—weakened by no dissent—disgraced by no bribe. Disdainful of forms of law, he is neither at pains for their abolition, nor under penalties by their observance; he is untaxed for their support, and unentangled by their practice. One Gipsy goes not to law with another, and I believe the reader will share

my own surprise in reflecting how seldom the name of a Gipsy occurs in the public annals of serious crime.

I do not know under what impression of Gipsy birth or character this legend of the Madonna's entertainment by a Zingarella took possession of the Tuscan mind. It is possible that, although not suggested as it might have been in England by the sound of their name, the inaccurate tradition of the origin of the tribe might have brought them to be regarded as the native poor of Egypt. But the ballad is evidently not an ancient one, and I am inclined to think it merely expresses, to the farthest point, the sense of the general fact, evident through all the New Testament narrative, that the close and kindly intercourse of Christ with mortal friends, and their faithfully believing ministry to Him, took place oftener among strangers than with His own people, among the poor rather than the rich, and among those who were reprobate and despised, rather than among men had in honour or esteem.

How deeply and cruelly the scorn of the Gipsy race had infixed itself in the minds of the prosperous middle classes of our own island, at the beginning of the century, may be seen to perfection by merely referring to the article upon them in the old 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' I trust the reader may feel, to his great and continued benefit, how much happier and, in the best wisdom, wiser, the Italian peasantry, pitying at once, and reverencing, the dejected state and wild instinct of the wanderers—how much happier Francesca, in thus



*Molta roba che in casa custodiava
Quella raccoglie ed a' poveri la dona*

SANTA ZITA giving Alms.

rejoicing to use her best powers in sympathy of conception with them, than the vulgar British citizen, bred amidst the impudence of wealth, and arrogance of philosophy, in conceiving no more of the Zingaro's world-haunting mystery than he has defined in the following words:—

“Gypsies, an outlandish tribe of vagabonds, who, disguising themselves in uncouth habits, smearing their faces and bodies, and framing to themselves a canting language, wander up and down, and under pretence of telling fortunes, curing diseases, etc., abuse the common people, trick them out of their money, and steal all they can come at. It is incredible to think how this regular swarm of banditti has spread itself over the face of the earth. They wander about in Asia, in the interior parts of Africa, and, like locusts, have overrun most of the European nations. In Italy they abound, especially in the dominions of the church, on account of the bad police, and prevalence of superstition, which permit and entice them to deceive the ignorant.”

Such was the state of feeling in Scotland, and more especially in the Gude Town of Edinburgh, towards the Gipsy, at the time when Scott, with his generous power of looking upon the heart, subdued, or kept in the background, all the pretty and virtuous girlhood in the most exquisite of his romances, that he might keep for its best loved and most honoured heroine “that witch, Meg Merrilies, who should have been burned with a

tar-barrel twenty years since, for a harlot, thief, witch, and gipsy.”*

I have noticed, in former analyses of Scott's work, how much higher in tone, stronger in conception, and sincerely beautiful in treatment, the stories always are in which he freely accepts, and affectionately realizes, the supernatural imagery consecrated by Scottish tradition, than those in which, for fear of an unsympathizing public, or supercilious review, he minces and explains away what vestiges of marvel he was still fain to use for picturesque effect, to the disappointed fancy, and but awkwardly contented reason, of the philosophical audience. I must ask my readers carefully to observe that this superiority in the more imaginative fiction consists not only in the nobler material and passion of its incidents, (as for instance in the scene of ‘The Monastery’ where the child Mary Avenel sees her Father's spirit on Halloween night, as compared with that of ‘Peveril,’ in which the child Julian's courage is only tried by the apparition of the Countess of Derby from behind the sliding panel), but in the assertion of a great truth respecting human mind and nature, overlooked totally in the meaner conceptions of the sceptic novelist. Namely, that, whatever the truth or error of the tenets represented by any superstitious creed that has had power in this world, the persons now familiarly accused of imposture did with their entire souls and hearts believe in

* The Dominie's description of her, expressing the mind of the orthodox church.

them. The ascription of deliberate and selfish imposture to the priests, augurs, magi, or astrologers of antiquity is only possible in the state of vicious stupor which fastens on men who live in an age of inherent and all-corrupting falsehood—who are accustomed to see trade founded on lying, fortune on gambling, policy on secresy, and fame on affectation.

The reader who wishes to understand either the Spirit of man, or the laws of God, must put all such conceptions of his race away from him with scorn, and for ever. The Athenians believed in Athena, the Jews in Jehovah, the Arabs in Allah, the Christians in Christ, as positively and utterly as the most advanced modern disbelieves them: the religious ceremonies of every great nation in all the world of all time have been performed by faithful, truthful, and benevolent men, and the practice of vaticination which obtained the confidence of ages did so because the prophet honestly believed himself inspired, and the people intelligently recognized that their fate corresponded in some signal manner to his prophecy.

That is the broad fact and living principle of human history. No liar has ever deceived, nor rascal governed,* the world. What is prevalently taught *may* be wholly, *must* be partly, false, but its power is only the more

* Compare 'Crown of Wild Olive,' p. 125. "All power, properly so called, is wise and benevolent. There may be capacity in a drifting fire-ship to destroy a fleet; there may be venom enough in a dead body to infect a nation:—but

I.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF SANTA ZITA.

NOTHING is more amazing to me, among the simplicities of well-meaning mankind, than the way in which Catholic writers accumulate, and Catholic prelates permit the accumulation of, any quantity of feebly sentimental and idly decorative nonsense round the realities of sacred lives, until the whole story becomes incredible to men of common sense, and the good of it, to practical persons, totally lost. Here is a quite unquestionable fact in the thirteenth century, for example, of extreme and lovely significance,—that a poor servant girl, living in the midst of an intensely active and war-like city, becomes so known there, and so beloved, for her mere and pure goodness, that in thirty years after her death the greatest poet of Italy sufficiently distinguishes a burgher of Lucca from one of any other city by calling him “one of Santa Zita’s Elders.” A few external facts about her childhood are remembered, with the reports of two or three inconspicuous miracles, not so much done by her, as happening to her: and these, with all that is really known of her character, are related, as

dependent on the sincerity of its teachers ; nor was ever a creed accepted vitally by a multitude of simpletons ;—the fool is capable only of *disbelief*. Of course, even by the sincerest men, elements of artifice always have been, and I conclude, though not without hesitation, always must be, used in the management of multitudes, if the will of the multitude is appealed to in the matter. At all times, also, there have necessarily been false priests, unjust judges, bribed soothsayers, and juggling magicians. There have also, at all times, been crowds among the lower orders only too willing to be corrupted, and only too apt to be deceived ; but if the falsehood increase, and reach a certain point of dissemination, it expires in the ruin alike of the deceiver and deceived. Periods of crime and catastrophe, often of long duration, first infect, then cleanse, the earth and her inhabitants ; but truth and life still bear up her pillars, and succeeding epochs behold the revival of generations strong in faith, and happy in virtue.

Of this much, respecting what we now call priestcraft or prophet-craft, I can absolutely assure, and his own reflection will on sufficient examination of history convince, every honest reader. How far the best and ablest of the human race have been themselves deceived in these their which of you, the most ambitious, would desire a drifting kingdom robed in consuming fire, or a poison-dipped sceptre whose touch was mortal ? There is no true potency, remember, but that of help ; nor true ambition, but ambition to save."

they have been vitally believed among her people from that day to this, in the following country song, which would have been lost to us, but for Francesca's pity for it. But when I look at the authorised versions and editions of the story by Catholic historians, I find, first, that in the 'Dictionnaire des Sciences Ecclesiastiques' her name does not occur at all; secondly, that Alban Butler takes no notice whatever of the miracles happening to her while she was alive, which have all a special meaning; but only of the 'juridically established' ones at her grave, which have no meaning whatever, even had they been related (which they are not); thirdly, that earlier writers on the subject merely copy from each other, with studious variations of phrase to conceal the copying, and contain, all put together, vitally nothing more than the popular tradition; and lastly, that though in all the versions, as well as in the ballad, the *name* of her native village is carefully preserved to us, the whereabouts of it is told by nobody. And as the imps of darkness would have it, when I was in Italy last year, with leisure enough on my hands to look for the place, I spent my afternoons in geological pursuit of the beddings of Lucca marble, and never thought of questioning in which glen of it Santa Zita was born.

For that matter, all glens among those marble mountains are nearly alike: vine and olive below, chestnut higher up, pasture and cornfield between woods of stone-pine on the crests: and there is no more beautiful

convictions, I do not here assert, or debate: but only farther warn the inquirer not to allow himself to be confused by the equivocations, apologies, or metaphysical reduction to vacuum, with which modern divinity falteringly defends the Faith it is ashamed to utter, and afraid to walk by. All nature is indeed miraculous,—yet St. Peter's draught of fishes was not the same thing as an ordinary haul at Yarmouth: all true speech is prophetic, yet the advice of a sensible friend is not of like authority with the prophecy of Daniel. Let the inquirer judge, according to his modesty and knowledge, whether Shakespeare, Scott, Virgil, Horace, or he, are the shrewder in conception or wiser in belief; but let him be clear in comprehension of their language, and definition of their meaning; and call, with the same unequivocal simplicity, a sibyl a sibyl, a gipsy a gipsy, and a witch a witch.

scene, nor, to my thinking, any other scene in the world pregnant with historical interest so singular, as that from the meadowy ridge of the Monte Pisano, with Pisa at your feet on one side,—her Baptistery and Campo Santo minutely clear, like the little carved models she sells of them,—and Lucca, like a mural crown fallen among the fields of the Val di Serchio on the other: and all the Riviera di Levante, as far as Chiavari, purple between the burning bays of the Gulph of Genoa.

Whether Zita's native farm was in vale or plain of this country,* matters little, for the mountain influence on character is alike over both. I repeat from the eighteenth letter of Fors, written in April of 1872, two casual references to this scenery and to its people, which will be of use to us now:—

“There are poppies, and bright ones too, about the banks and roadsides; but the corn of Val di Serchio† is too proud to grow with poppies, and is set with wild gladiolus instead, deep violet colour. Here and there a mound of crag rises out of the fields, crested with stone-pine, and studded all over with the large stars of the white rock-cistus. Quiet streams, filled

* Francesca has found it out for me, from a good priest in Lucca. It was a village among the hills nine miles north of the city.

† In ‘Fors,’ always Val di Niévole, including the higher vale of Pistoja.

THE STORY OF EDWIGE.

THE woman, in that same picture of St. Zita and the beggars, who is coming round the corner with a little child in her arms, is Edwige Gualtieri, the good widow who was such a friend of poor Ida, and who has been with me so many years. It is very hard for me to write about her without making too long a story, because, during the years we have been together, she has given me such a full account of her life, and it is all so interesting, that I hardly know what to leave out.

She was the eldest daughter of eleven children in a very poor family, and they lived about four miles outside Porta Romana, at a place called Le Tavernuzze, belonging to the parish of Le Rose, so named for the beauty and abundance of the roses that grow there.* Even from her infancy she had a hard life: her father, whose business was to pave roads, she describes as having been “a good man, but a little too fond of society.” This is her

* Compare Edwige's description of her native village in the last number of ‘Fors Clavigera.’

with close crowds of the golden waterflag, wind beside meadows painted with purple orchis. On each side of the great plain is a wilderness of hills, veiled at their feet with a grey cloud of olive woods; above, sweet with glades of chestnut:—peaks of more distant blue, still, to-day, embroidered with snow, are rather to be thought of as vast precious stones than mountains, for all the state of the world's palaces has been hewn out of their marble. 166063

“Nor is the peasant race of Val di Serchio unblest, if honesty, kindness, food sufficient for them, and peace of heart, can anywise make up for poverty in current coin. Only the evening before last, I was up among the hills to the south of Lucca, close to the remains of the country-house of Castruccio Castracani, who was Lord of the Val di Nievole, and much good land besides, in the year 1328; (and whose sword, you perhaps remember, was presented to the King of Sardinia, on his visit to the Lucchesi after driving out the old Duke of Tuscany, which he had no more business to do than to drive out the Duke of Devonshire;* and Mrs. Browning, in her simplicity thinking it all quite proper, wrote a beautiful poem upon the presentation). Well, I was up among the hills, that way, in places where no English ever dream of going, being altogether lovely and at rest, and the country life in

* I retouch ‘Fors’ a little here, to make it intelligible without the context.

way of expressing that, when he was working away from home, he would sometimes spend all his earnings in amusing himself with his companions, and forget to send anything to the poor wife and children. So at times they were in great straits.

When the last child was born, the father was away from home, and there was a long bill owing at the baker's; and the day that poor baby was six days old, the baker refused to give them any more bread until the bill was paid. So there were eleven children and nothing to eat! Poor Assunta, (that was the mother's name), knew that there was a man living outside Porta Prato, who owed some money to her husband, and she felt sure that he would pay it to her if she could see him and tell her story; but there were six miles from her house to his. But she took courage, and, having been first to church, walked the six miles, saw the man, told her story and received the money, and then walked the six miles back again.

Assunta was a saint on earth, if ever there was one. Edwige says that she never complained, nor lost her patience, nor spoke a sharp word, nor was displeased when she saw others better off than herself. Whenever she was in any great trouble, and others pitied her, she always said, "I cannot complain; there was One who might have chosen what He would in the world,—and He chose to suffer." She suffered much in her life; hunger and cold, and the neglect of her

them unchanged; and I had several friends with me, and among them, one of the young girls who were at Furness Abbey last year: and, scrambling about among the vines, she lost a pretty little cross of Florentine work. Luckily, she had made acquaintance, only the day before, with the peasant mistress of a cottage close by, and with her two younger children, Adam and Eve. Eve was still tied up tight in swaddling clothes, down to the toes, and carried about as a bundle; but Adam was old enough to run about, and found the cross; and his mother gave it us back next day.

“Not unblest, such a people, though with some common human care and kindness you might bless them a little more. If only you would not curse them; but the curse of your modern life is fatally near, and only for a few years more, perhaps, they will be seen—driving their tawny kine, or with their sheep following them,—to pass, like pictures in enchanted motion, among their glades of vine.”

It would be difficult to conceive an ideal of human life more perfect than we thus saw with our eyes, and knew with our hearts, in the dingle of Monte Pisano. On the steep brow of the hill above, reached by a winding path, rose a beautiful Franciscan monastery (the building is still there—the monks have since been driven away); far above receded the waving summits of the pine-clad hills; beneath, the grand spaces between the rocks were all shaded either with chestnut or vine;

husband whom she loved, and the loss of several of her children; but it pleased the Lord to give her one blessing, which was the one after all that perhaps she cared most for: those of her children who did not die in infancy, grew up all that she could wish them to be. I saw her not very long before she died; a very sweet, saintly, happy face, beautiful even in old age, with soft dark eyes, and snow-white hair, under her little old-fashioned black velvet cap.

Of course in such a family the children all had to go to work very young, and Edwige, when a very little child, was sent to a mistress to learn to weave linen. She was always fond of work, and learned everything very quickly, and she always looks back on the days that she passed with her mistress as among the happiest of her life. She has told me how, as she used to run along the path between her house and that of her mistress, early in the morning, sometimes she would eat up all the bread that her poor mother had given her to last through the day; and how she used to cry sometimes if she saw the sun rise, because her mistress had said, "I shall expect you when the sun rises above Poggio de Belloccio." But her mistress never scolded when she arrived tired and out of breath, only laughed, and told her not to worry. And when sometimes, later in the day, she began to look pale and dragged, Signora Margherita (that was the name of this good mistress) guessed in a minute what the matter was. "I used to

the rocks green with arbutus,—gleams of the towers of Lucca seen here and there down the glen; and possessing these lovely places, a people of pure Etruscan descent, quietly laborious and honest; and keeping the happiness of their earliest Christian faith unchanged, even down to little Adam and Eve at play, before our mortal eyes, in their Lord's vineyard.

Beautiful as it all is, and thankful though we should be for the possible sight of it, nothing that now exists can give us any conception of the elements of Catholic rural life in Zita's time, for this terrible reason—that throughout Italy the towns which were then the citadel-tutors of her faith, and its visible glory, are now its angriest destroyers, and ignoblest disgrace. What Lucca was when her sacred handmaid came down to serve in her streets, we will see presently; but first, I want to think with the reader what a 'Saint,' whether of town or country, really is, and how such sort of men and women can be found, or made, if we want them.

Questions long since on my mind (see 'Ethics of the Dust,' Lecture VIII.)—curiously, I think, *not* on the mind of the ecclesiastical student in general; but to the best of our powers needing to be answered, before we can hope to get any conception of mediæval life in its truth or beauty.

In the first place, we need not at all trouble ourselves about canonization. Very certainly, many real saints have lived and died unknown,—and as certainly, no

be so glad," Edwige says, "when I saw her look at me, and shake her head, and smile, and then go and open the chest; for I knew she was going to give me a piece of bread. And then she would give me a beautiful large piece of bread, and tell me to go out in the garden and eat it, and rest for a while."

But I must not linger any longer over Edwige's childhood, though there is much that I should like to tell. At eighteen she married Tonino Gualtieri, a stone mason, whom I never knew; and came to live near Florence. Her husband was an excellent man, who is still remembered affectionately by those who knew him. She describes him as a pious, humble, Christian man, very retiring in his ways, *who liked to go to church where no one knew him, and always laid aside part of his earnings in the week to give to some aged or infirm people on Sunday; and he would rather deprive himself of any indulgence than of this pleasure.* During eleven years that they were together, her life was a very happy one. On Sundays (when they usually had a piece of meat for dinner) they used to leave the pentola simmering by the fire, and go out to church together, and afterwards for a walk about the city, *and Tonino would show her the buildings and statues, and they never wanted any other amusement.* After children came, they took them with them.

In those eleven years four children were born, all daughters. Then came that terrible year—if I am not

ecclesiastical authority could ever make the title other than honorary, for St. Cyril, St. Dunstan, or St. Dominic.

In the second place we are for the present to avoid all reference to the meaning of the word ‘sanctification’ as applied to Christians, or even to baptized persons, without exception, and of the word ‘consecration,’ as applied to persons appointed to sacred offices. What this last word means, shall be considered afterwards with relation to the powers of Kings and Priests; but here we have nothing to do with this branch of the enquiry. When a converted Dane or Saxon is baptized with his army, you do not immediately produce an army of Danish or Saxon saints; neither is it supposed that every vicar becomes a saint on obtaining a bishopric, or every heir-apparent on coming to the throne.

In the next place, it seems to me that our habit of using the word only of the holy persons who have believed in Christ, and not of the holy men of old to whom God spoke as a man speaketh to his friend, is an extremely false and confusing one.

We might surely say St. Abel, Enoch, Noah, or Daniel,—as truly as St. George, or Francis.

‘Then again—though this is a matter rather of carelessness than custom, it has caused no small confusion that we sometimes call angels ‘saints.’ To say St. Michael, or St. Gabriel, for Michael and Gabriel, makes us unconsciously lose sight of the great distinction between the holiness ascribed to God Himself, and

mistaken it was 1855—when the cholera visited Florence ; and in that time of terror, when so many were dying, the complaint attacked poor Tonino. He had gone out to his work in the morning, apparently as well as usual, but came home a few hours later, so changed that, as she says, one could hardly know him ! I will not dwell on the fearful details of his illness and death,—in eleven hours all was over. His last words were, “Take care of the children, Edwige, and the Lord will take care of you.”

For some time after he died, Edwige remained like one stunned. She shed no tears, she could neither eat nor sleep ; she could not understand what had happened. Only the thought of her children roused her a little. There were no debts. Tonino was a scrupulously honest man, and never bought what he could not afford ; but for the rest, they were left with hardly anything in the house. She found in one of his pockets money to the amount of eight lire toscane (I think about six francs, but I do not know exactly how to translate the old money into the new), but she was afraid at first to spend it. “I thought,” she said afterwards, “that his employers might have given him that money to buy something for them, and that he had forgotten to tell me of it before he died ; for I knew that on Monday we had counted over together what money there was (as we did always at the beginning of the week), and made our expenses accordingly : a little oil.

inherent in His unfallen creatures, from that which we conceive as separating one sinful creature from another.

Then farther,—and this is the most practical matter for our present business,—we must carefully separate the mythic saints from the real ones. Often some vestige of real life is the root of a mythic sanctity; there was assuredly a Cecilia, probably a Barbara, and a Catherine,—in remote possibility an Ursula,—but as saints, they are to the Christian Church merely the spiritual symbols of sacred Music, Architecture, Royalty, and Youth. Extremely useful and lovely in that figurative capacity, but with care to be recognized as imaginative, and not to be allowed with their cloudy outlines to disguise, or with their impossible virtue to deaden, the tangible reality, and actively stimulating examples, of the working saints.

Lastly,—and this bears especially on the life of Santa Zita,—it is of extreme importance to distinguish a Saint from an Innocent. Though certain states of malady are capable of spiritual impressions never granted to ordinary health, and although persons of infirm body or feeble intellect are often lovely in character, or may appear to be under some special heavenly guard, the word ‘Saint’ can never be applied to such, for there is distinct implication of demoniac power as having more or less dominion over all disease, in the Levitical forbidding of maimed victims for sacrifice.

And in all rational and authoritative sense the word

and some potatoes, and other things for the family. So I took the money, and went to the gentleman for whom my husband had worked, and told him about it; but he said, '*Keep it, your husband had earned it.*' And this was her only inheritance!

Just twenty days after her husband died, a fifth child was born, in the hospital of the Innocenti, where she was obliged to go. And now, as usual on such occasions, all her relations and friends began to tease and worry her, telling her that it was her duty to leave the new baby in the hospital. She had four already, more than she could support, (they said), but they would try and help her, if she would only behave like a sensible woman, and not undertake the baby too! But her husband's dying words were always in her mind. "I thought," she said, "that this last child was his, just the same, though he had never known her, and she looked more like him than any of the others; and I thought that when I should die and see my Tonino again, he would ask me if I had been good to the children, and how could I ever tell him that I had abandoned his little one? Besides, I thought that if the Lord had not wanted me to have the child, He would have taken her Himself; for no one thought she was going to live when she was born. I remember the head nurse said to me: '*You have a little daughter; give her your blessing and let God have her.*'" This head nurse was very kind to her, and took her part when others blamed her, and she gave a pretty

‘Saint’ can only be applied to persons in pure health of body, heart, and brain; and throughout the records of Christian life remaining to us, it is a primal, precious, and indisputable truth that the great saints, without exception, have been among and above all other known men and women, distinctively strong, kind, witty, and wise.

Getting clearly set then, these broad border walls of sainthood, let us think next what manner of betterness it may be, which actually, and often visibly, as in this instance of St. Zita, separates one Christian person from the rest, so as to make them eminently venerable to the rest, and eminently helpful and exemplary to them.

Note first, respecting this, that even supposing the natural good qualities of heart and mind given in equal measure,—so that, of possible saints born, one could not say that this babe, or the other, was good beyond all the rest,—still, the circumstances of life so thwart and limit some, and so irregularly aid others, that at last it is with human lives as with rock crystals,—thousands dim or broken for one quite pure and quite pointed.

But,—and this is the chief matter to be considered,—the ordinary needs and labours of life, the ordinary laws of its continuance, require many states of temper and phases of character, inconsistent with the perfectest types of Christianity. Pointed crystals cannot be made sea-beaches of,—or they must lose their points. Pride,

little cap to the baby (which was named Tonina), and several other things.

Edwige stayed a week at the hospital, no more; and then she took the baby in her arms and walked home with it,* for she could not leave her children any longer. They were staying with some of her poor neighbours, who could not, she thought, afford to keep them. It was a very hot day, and she felt very sad and desolate as she carried the fatherless child up the lonely dusty road to St. Francesco di Paolo, where she lived, and where she knew that the house was empty of provisions; but she thought again of what she considered her husband's promise—"Take care of the children, Edwige, and the Lord will take care of you." An old gentleman who lived near by—he was a good man, but not rich—saw her going into the house with her baby, and he sent her over a pentola† of soup, which had been prepared for his own dinner.

Her friend the head nurse had given her some broken pieces of bread, so she fed the children, and thought that the promise was being fulfilled. And now commenced a long period of literal living by Faith.

* Compare, above, her mother's twelve-mile walk (p. 210).

† 'Pentola,' a two-handed earthen pot, chiefly used for boiling; saucepan-shape, and holding from one to five quarts. 'Pentolino,' an earthen pitcher with one handle, holding not more than a quart.

the desire of bodily pleasure, anger, ambition, at least so far as the word implies a natural pleasure in governing, pugnacity, obstinacy, and the selfish family and personal affections, have all their necessary offices,—for the most part, wide and constant,—in the economy of the world. The saintly virtues, humility, resignation, patience (in the sense of feeling no anger)—obedience, meaning the *love* of obeying rather than of commanding, fortitude against all temptation of bodily pleasure, and the full-flowing charity which forbids a selfish love,—are all conditions of mind possible to few, and manifestly meant to furnish forth those who are to be seen as fixed lights in the world;—and by no means to be the native inheritance of all its fire-flies. Wherever these virtues truly and naturally exist, the persons endowed with them become, without any doubt or difficulty, eminent in blessing to, and in rule over, the people round them; and are thankfully beloved and remembered as Princes of God, for evermore. Cuthbert of Melrose, Martin of Tours, Benedict of Monte Cassino, Hugo of Lincoln, Genevieve of Paris, Hilda of Whitby, Clara of Assisi, Joan of Orleans, have been, beyond any denial, and without one diminishing or disgracing fault or flaw, powers for good to all the healthy races, and in all the goodly spirits, of the Christendom which honours them; and the candour of final history will show that their unknown, or known but to be slandered, servants and disciples have been the ministers of

She began immediately to work; at first she went to take care of the cholera patients, of whom there were many; afterwards she used to go out washing, or to help the reapers at harvest time; or, when families moved from one house to another, she would help move the furniture. When one of her neighbours moved to a place outside Porta la Croce, about three miles from where she lived, she carried all the furniture there, making of course several journeys. She hired a hand cart for the heavier things, and the rest she took in her arms. But all her work would never have been sufficient, for there were six mouths then to feed, if she had not been helped much. "Often," she says, "very often we have gone to bed without a crumb of anything in the house to eat the next day, and without knowing where we could find any; but in the morning God would send some one to knock at the door and bring us help. He knew that I had five babies!" Of course, most of the help came from very poor people: I believe it is always so; the poor are those who pity the poor. There was one poor old beggar who used to go about the country with a linen bag, and he would stop at her door and give her the best pieces of bread out of his bag, saying, 'You are poorer than I, because you have these children.' One day there was nothing in the house to eat excepting a few beans which a contadino had given one of the children, and they were not enough. So Edwige went to a lady for whom she

vital energy in every beautiful art and holy state of its national life.

And the most imperatively practical corollary which must follow from our rightly understanding these things, is that, seeing the first of the saintly virtues is Humility, nobody must set themselves up to be a saint. The lives good for most people, and intended for them, are the lives of sheep and robins: and they may be every evening and morning thankful that they have fields to lie down in, and banks to build nests in, and are not called by Heaven to the sorrow of its thrones.

Not but that in the duties of domestic life, rightly done, and in its contingent trials, rightly borne, there may be call enough for all the virtue that is in the best of us;—but there is always so much of inferiority in the lot, that it was not chosen in expectation of trial, but of pleasure; and the sufferings it may bring are not for righteousness' sake, but for our affection's sake. And whatever extravagance or unreasonableness may be evident or demonstrable in the practices of ascetic life, the reader will find, if he tries any of them, that there are many things easily laughed at which are not easily done; and that, whatever may be our Protestant estimate of the dignity or use of sainthood, this at least is certain, that it is an extremely hard thing to be a saint.

Few writers have believed, and assuredly none have said, more good of general human nature than I; and

sometimes worked, meaning to ask for something, but she had never begged before, and her courage failed, and when she tried to speak, she burst into tears, and could say nothing. And the lady said, 'Do not try to speak, I know what you want!' and gave her a loaf of bread.

After a while Edwige obtained regular work for a washerwoman in Borgo St. Frediano, who employed several women. She used to go at six in the morning and work until eight in the evening, taking an hour's rest in the middle of the day, and for this she received eighteen *krazie*.^{*} Meanwhile the children were left at home under charge of their eldest sister, Clementina, a pretty, delicate, little blue-eyed girl, then eleven years old. Edwige would leave them what she could to eat during the day, but there was never enough; and sometimes when she came home in the evening, she would find that poor Clementina had eaten nothing all day. "I gave it all to the little ones," she would say, "because I could not bear to hear them cry." As for Edwige herself, she was nearly starved, and has told me that sometimes it seemed as though the odour of the bread in the bakers' shops would drive her crazy.

She could not support such a life long; she was attacked with varicose veins, the torment of washerwomen.

* Properly 'crazie,' but I spell with a k because I like the look of it better. A *crazia* is seven centesimi, not quite three farthings.

few men have been so fortunate in the number of good and dear people whom they have known, both in their own family, and among strangers. I am quite ready to aver the unconscious Sainthood of my Celtic,—the involuntary Sainthood of my Saxon,—aunt; and my mother would certainly have been a Saint,—but for my father and me. I have friends whose cheerfulness it would grieve me to exchange for more devotional behaviour; and others, whose faults I should miss, if they were wholly washed away. But so it is, that the white robes of daily humanity are always in some way or other a little the worse for the wear; and to keep them wholly unspotted from the world, and hold the cross in the right hand and palm in the left, steadily through all the rough walking of it, is granted to very, very few creatures that live by breath and bread.

And yet, fully recognizing all this, I cannot but be always surprised at the great fuss that Lucca made over her little Zita. The city was, every soul of it, in a splendid state of pious and heroic excitement, at the time when Zita was brushing her master's cloak, and washing up his crockery. Lucca had built, in the limitless religious fervour of the previous century, some thirty splendid churches in the square quarter of an English mile which her walls defended: the Kings of Europe vowed by her Volto Santo: the cross was inlaid over all her gates, the shields of her knights sustained by sculptured angels. The pride of Pisa herself did but

For some time she concealed her illness, for love of her children, and worked when in great pain, and when she should have been in her bed; she grew worse, and one day, when she was hanging out the clothes to dry in the yard, one of the veins broke; she fell to the ground, and was not able to rise. Her companions, who all liked her, carried her into the house, and did what they could for her; they put together a little money for her, and hired a cab to send her home. And then came a long and painful illness, from which she did not recover fairly for two years, and she has never been very strong since. When she was ill, she used to braid straw all day (an art that she had learnt from her mother), and when she was not able to sleep, which was often, she would braid all night too, in the dark. And a friend who still lives near her, named Palmira, used to sell the braid for her, and bring her straw to make more.

One night, as she was dividing the bread to the children, she said, "We must eat moderately to-night, because this bread must last to-morrow." And little Tonina, then six years old, said, "I do not think so, for we are told to say in the Lord's Prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*. God would never have told us to ask for it, if He had not meant to give it to us. Let us eat all that we need to-night, and then say that prayer altogether, and He will send us some more to-morrow." This was such plain common sense that there was no contradicting it; the hungry family finished all the bread

follow with more finished stateliness the traces of her steps in sacred architecture, and in the very moment when the small mountain girl came down to take her 'situation,' Niccola Pisano was carving Christ's Nativity, within a dozen miles of her master's door. Enough, certainly, to put the child extremely on her good behaviour,—but the very last state of things, one should have thought, in which the least notice would have been taken by anybody how she behaved!

One might indeed understand her gradually gaining notice for the consistency of her life, and in her contentment with it. Certainly the monastic bodies must have endeavoured to make her an almoner or a prioress;—certainly the knights' ladies must have wanted her for their maid or housekeeper; and she, staying with her master, and remaining proof against every form of pride, and against the hope in which it so often subtly veils itself, of a wider sphere of duty or usefulness, might in the end attract wonder enough; besides the ever farther-circling love of the poor, grateful to her not merely for her alms, but also, and much more, for her fellowship. But then the next thing that puzzles me is,—why nobody began to do likewise? Why, in a city wholly zealous for its religion, there were not found other servant-girls who would live as savingly, and give alms;—or great ladies who could see that such sort of work for Christ had more zest in it than shutting themselves into cells, numbering their prayers by dried pease, or

that evening; then knelt down, and said the Lord's Prayer with great devotion. And the next morning, being stormy weather, a neighbour sent them in a little provision; and Tonina was delighted, and said, "You see that I had reason!" I think that was the last time: the family were never reduced to such great extremity again.

For after Edwige had recovered, she entered our service as my particular attendant, coming every morning, and staying with me for some hours. And since that, the course of our lives has been together. Her children are all married now, and all mothers of families, and she lives very happily with Clementina and Clementina's children, when she is not with me. Now that she is not cold, nor hungry, nor over-worked, she considers herself a very fortunate and wealthy person; and sometimes says that she is *living in gold!*

But before I leave Edwige, though I have written so much about her, I must tell some of her sayings, which are extremely original. I remember when the marble group of 'Pirro e Polissena' was first exhibited (the group which is now under the Loggia de' Lanzi), she and I went to see it, and she looked at it for a long time, and never spoke a word, but sighed deeply, and grew very pale. After we came away, I asked her what she thought of it, and she answered very sadly, 'I think he was a very wicked young man; but then he was only a soldier, poor creature!' Edwige does not admire

giving gorgeous gifts of that which had cost them nothing. And, much more, why, not only then, and there, but also before, and since, and everywhere, were no more, and are no more, Zitas than one,—or granting, what I believe to be the truth, that in real nature of goodness and act there are and have been many such, why do we all take no notice of them,—and get no good of them, but, only our fires lighted, and carpets swept?

The reason why there are no more is partly indeed simple enough, that the sharp severity and hardship of such a life are quite intolerable by any but the strongest wills and constitutions; and the people who possess both have rarely a mind so to prove them. There is no debate about this:—the great saints and the little,—(those except only who have been suddenly called from conversion to martyrdom, and have had no time to live, whether softly or hardly), are of one accord as to the necessity, to pure spiritual state, not merely of temperate and simple habits, but of steady denial to the body of all but its absolute needs, and steady infliction upon it of as much pain as it can without injury bear. The exaggeration of penance into palsy is of course insane; and the great saints, being all of them, as I said, preeminently witty and wise, never exaggerate anything; so that the practised hardship becomes, with them, unconscious, and hard no more, while it gives them, in mind and body, the ease of an athlete. But to most people, their resolution is as impossible as

the army. But her sayings are not always sayings to laugh at. Once, a great many years ago, she and I were trying to accomplish something which we considered of consequence for some of our friends, and a person who had promised to help us failed at the last minute. I was much discouraged, and said, 'We have no one now but the good Lord to help us.' And she answered contentedly, 'I rather think, if we have Him, we shall not want any one else.'

She was talking with me one day about some rich people who made very hard bargains with the poor whom they employed, and she said, 'Ladies and gentlemen always do such things, and see no harm in it. I suppose they think there is no need for them to be good. They are so rich, they can give away money in charity, and they think that they can go to heaven that way, and perhaps they will; but I think it would be better if they would try and be good too.' I told her that my own father had never done such things, to which she replied, 'But he was good, *just as if he had been poor.*'

In the days at Venice, after the *cucina economica* had disabled my eyes, I used to amuse myself by taking Edwige to see the pictures, and listening to her remarks about them. She preferred to anything else the immense 'Paradise' by Tintoretto, in the Ducal Palace, which she looked at for a long time in silence; and then astonished the custode, who had been telling a long story about the size, price, and artistic merits of the picture, by saying,

their faith; and quite necessarily so, for the world could no more go on with all its heroes in sackcloth than with all its mountains in snow: only don't let the glory of the celestial virtue be lost to us, because we are generally not expected ourselves to be better than our dogs and horses.

And further, once well understanding and admitting what even wise heathens knew, that "*quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit, ab Dîs plura feret*," the general tenor of our thoughts and scope of our charities will assuredly become purer and more open every day, and an 'æsthetic' sense of pleasure in duty, healthily replace that which we may have cultivated in upholstery. With quite infinite gain of good both for ourselves and others.

One or two particulars respecting Zita's thoughts and ways in such matters, not found in the ballad, I add from the '*Leggendario della Vita di Gesu Christo, di Maria Virgine, e de Santi*,' written by a father of the Oratory of Venice, and printed in Venice in 1757.

1. Her mother's name was Buonissima,—perhaps only the constant epithet mistaken for a real name; in any case, all reports agree as to the extreme piety and worth of her parents and relations. Her uncle is named in the ballad only for this reason, as he has no part in its story. And I suppose it is broadly a physical fact that you can have no saint without the goodness of both father and mother.

‘I hope there is a place for *us* up there, don’t you?’ I wish you could have seen that custode stare! I suppose nobody ever made such a remark to him before.

Since you have bought my book, nobody ever advises me at all (excepting Edwige, whose ideas are somewhat original). She seems to think that she knows all about the habits, dresses, etc., of saints and angels. One day she was quite indignant because a visitor said that she had seen the Madonna painted without shoes. ‘Saint Joseph was a poor man, I know,’ said Edwige; ‘but I am *sure* he would have given his wife a pair of shoes. Who knows how fond he was of her!’

I remember long ago, one day when I was looking at the sky, I said, ‘I wonder why I cannot paint a sky like that?’ and she said, ‘I suppose it is because the Master can do better than the scholar,’—which saying has gone farther toward *keeping me from being discouraged than anything that any one ever said to me.* (Italics mine.—J. R.)

She did not care much for the historical pictures in the Ducal Palace,—all she said about them was that ‘The people who used to live in this house seem to have been generally good people.’ She saw so many of them painted saying their prayers, that she took an impression that was their usual occupation. Next to the ‘Paradise,’ she fell in love with the ‘Calling of Matthew from the Receipt of Custom’ in S. Giorgio de Schiavoni, of which she said it made her feel ‘just like hearing a

2. By way of example of carelessness, the Padre says she was born in 1200, and died in 1272, aged sixty! The ballad says, born 1218, and died 1288, making her seventy. A life of natural length in mid-thirteenth century is all we need remember.

3. In the course of her fifty years of service, she was never seen without a piece of work in her hand, or under it, and was accustomed to say "there is no pious servant who is not laborious."

4. She rejoiced in any kind of indignity or hardship put upon her by her fellow servants, but was wholly intolerant of the least licentious or impure talk. Her power of allaying anger was limitless—"Bastava che Zita si facesse vedere, che calmava ogni iracondia."

5. Her habit of tacit prayer was constant, "non interrompendo nè la fatica l'orazione, nè l'orazione la fatica."

6. Another miracle is recorded of her in the Venetian legend, besides the three told in the ballad,* namely, that her master having reproached her with too lavish gifts of his corn in time of famine, she took him up to the granary and showed it to him still entirely full. But I am inclined to abide in the Tuscan creed of the three miracles only; and they are all three quite delight-

* I find it was related in the ballad also, but omitted with some other passages which Francesca thought tiresome. I do not alter my text, because this fourth miracle is virtually the introduction to that of the loaves.

chapter in the Bible.' The evening after we had seen it, she told me she had been thinking about that picture all day. 'That poor man, how happy he was when the Lord Jesus called him! And when I saw it, I was thinking—supposing He should call us, should *we* go so willingly? And I thought, if He called me, it would be a great happiness, only I should be a little sorry to leave the Signorina; but still, if He told me to come, I would. And the Signorina would be sorry to leave the Mama, but if He called her she would have to go.' So much for Edwige's opinion on Venetian art.

One day she went to cross the traghetto, but it was a little rough, and she expressed some reluctance to cross "the ocean." The gondolier assured her there was no danger, but she told him she really could not take the responsibility, it would be so inconvenient for her padrona if she should be drowned while *she was on a journey*.

When first she came to us I had a fine bed of mignonette, just coming into blossom. One morning I went into the kitchen and found Edwige cutting every stalk of it into shreds for the soup. She had cut it all down, mistaking it for spinach.

Edwige had other domestic trials: eggs grew scarce, and she remarked, with very unusual severity, that hens were 'bestie tanto perverse,' for they always stop laying just when eggs cost the most!

Once at L'Abetone they had a Christmas perform-

fully easy to “explain”—if you want to. The pilgrim only meant to say, politely, that the water, drawn for him by so nice a little maid, was as good as wine;—the loaves baked by nobody had been made by her mistress, for the jest;—and the old beggar who brought the cloak back was only thought to be an angel because beggars usually don’t bring things back.

Have it your own way. But this, observe, is sure, that the happy belief in these three miracles leavened the entire peasant mind of Tuscany for six hundred years; and that in the three subjects of them—bread, water, and clothing—they sum the need and good of servile labour: illustrating the daily thought which is right, as well as the refusal of forethought, which is right, concerning what the Christian shall eat, and drink, and put on. This also you see, that Zita attempted no miracles,—expected none,—and in her half century of service recognised or imagined none, but these typical three only; and that her habitual prayer therefore can only have been for habitual peace and blessing, strength and joy, comfort and sustenance, for all around her;—the daily bread of life to their lips and souls.

As, unwillingly, I cease from speaking of her, I chance upon a little piece of quite perfect thought about an old servant, not held a saint at all, but ~~representing~~ only the quiet virtue by which all things and creatures exist. It is spoken, by an old French gentleman, to a young French lady, of an old French housekeeper, over whom she is

ance of the Nativity, followed by Pulcinella, which seemed a queer combination; but Edwige, who was present with fourteen grandchildren, looked on the whole affair, Pulcinella and all, in a purely devotional spirit, and came to us the next day, looking as if she had been in heaven. She said that the porter's young wife, Cecchina, who seemed to think that the little wooden figures were alive, asked if the Gesù Bambino was born every year! Edwige shook her head as she told me this with an air of compassion, and remarked, "Some people have ideas!"

Yes, Edwige, dear; and some people haven't any,—but we, at least, who have heard your story, shall have a better idea for ever of all that is serviceablest in earthly duty—sacreddest in mortal sorrow—and purest in the religion which has alike known, and visited, the affliction of the fatherless and the widow; and kept itself—as the very clouds of Morning—unspotted from the World.

JOHN RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD,

8th February, 1885.

to have rule.* I would translate it if I could, but I rejoice in its being too beautiful, and beyond rendering in any words but its own.

“Jeanne, écoutez-moi encore : Vous vous êtes fait jusqu’ici bien venir de ma gouvernante, qui, comme toutes les vieilles gens, est assez morose de son naturel. Ménagez-la. J’ai cru devoir la ménager moi-même, et souffrir ses impatiences. Je vous dirai, Jeanne, respectez-la. Et en parlant ainsi, je n’oublie pas qu’elle est ma servante et la vôtre : elle ne l’oubliera pas davantage. Mais vous devez respecter en elle son grand âge, et son grand cœur. C’est une humble créature qui a longtemps duré dans le bien ; elle s’y est endurcie. Souffrez la roideur de cette âme droite. Sachez commander ; elle saura obéir. Allez, ma fille, arrangez votre chambre de la façon qui vous semblera le plus convenable pour votre travail et votre repos.”

Divided work and rest—so be they alike blest,—to all maids that bid, and maids that obey.

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, MAY, 1884.

* ‘Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard,’ p. 295.

THE BALLAD OF SANTA ZITA.



LIFE OF
S. ZITA,

PROTECTRESS OF LUCCA.

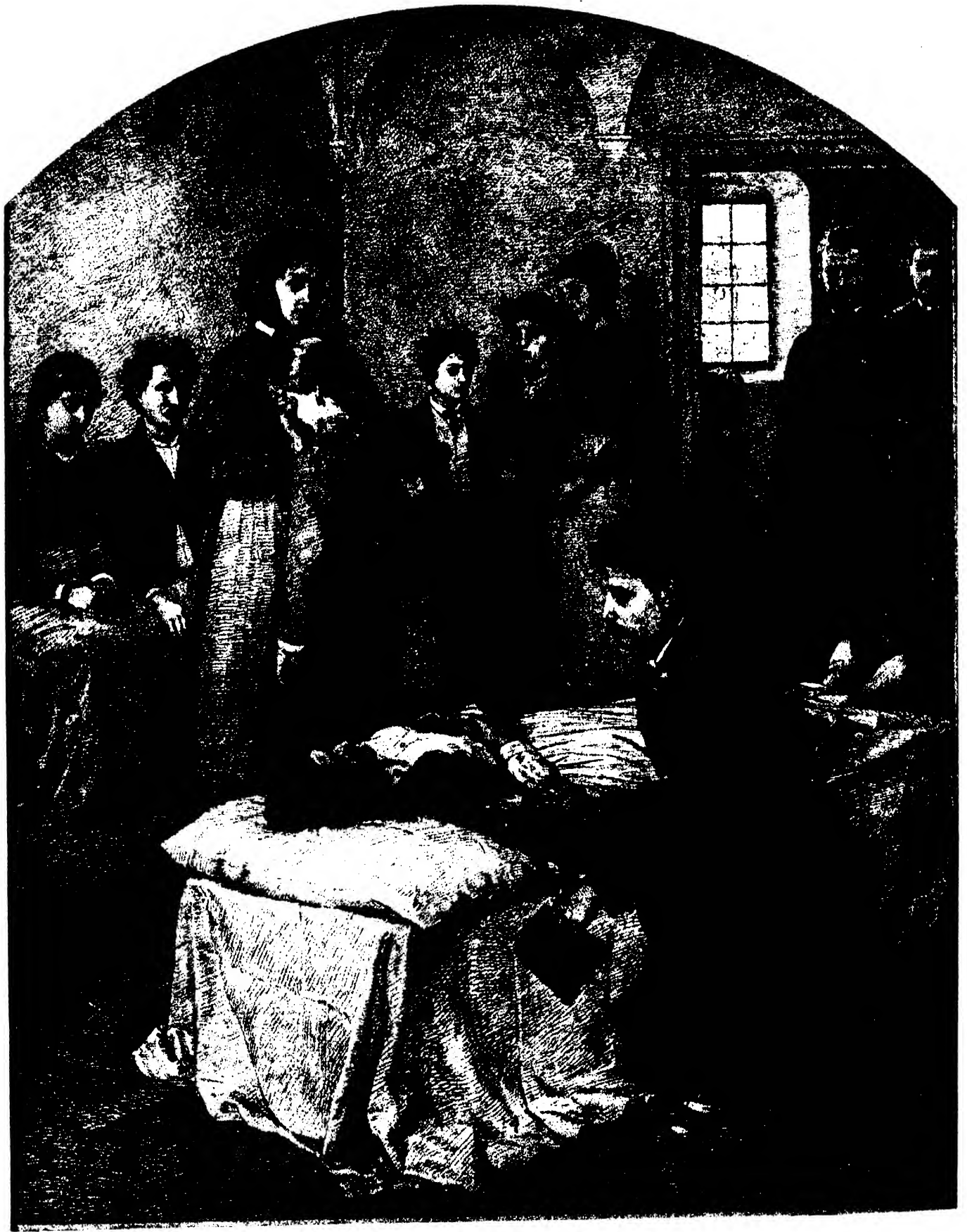
ARRANGED IN OTTAVA RIMA BY GIUSEPPE DI BARTOLOMEO CASENTI, OF
LUCCA, IN THE YEAR 1616.

I.

Splendor supremo, sommo Redentore,
Per cui risiede tua infinità gloria;
Concedi al basso ingegno il tuo favore,
Ajuto porgi a mia debil memoria:
Ch'io possa raccontar con puro cuore,
Di Santa Zita la sua degna istoria;
Accio che sappia ogni fedel cristiano,
Di sua nazione, e com'è in San Frediano.

II.

A te ricorro, glorioso Iddio,
E di tal grazia non mi abbandonare:
Dch, porgi aiuto allo spirito mio,
Che possa in rima sua leggenda fare.
Senza il tuo aiuto niente non poss'io,
Nè strada trovo a poter cominciare,
Perciò ricorro a te, Bontà infinita,
Che narrar possa a piena la sua vita.



Speak to me, Speak to me, Mouth of Love.





But just as Zita, handmaiden, passed the door,
 Her master's handmaid, with her sewing up
 He looked to see if still the cloth she wore
 It was the same! At that his heart was shaken,
 With love and pity for his own lost grace,
 And she, poor girl, in haste she made no reply,
 But a hush he had, a language in his eyes,
 Bowed up, great the change, with the new.

Who, thinking Zita kindly, to be kind,
 Gave back the cloth like new in hand to give
 His face all changed, and shone with heavenly light,
 And looked her with a reflected glow,
 They tried to speak, but could proceed no further,
 Recognized of it, in that world of light,
 Gave comfort had to give their hearts within,
 An angel of the Lord had with them been.

Mentre che Zita in casa se n'entrava,
 Ecco rivide incontro il suo padrone!
 Se con la veste ben lui la guardava,
 Non li fu punto di soddisfazione:
 Con essa Zita il padren ragionava,
 Ravveder li nulla riprensione.
 Mentre il padrone con lei s'entendeva,
 Giunse il mandato che la veste aveva.

Portava quella sopra le sue braccia,
 Detto a Zita, e quella singolarità
 E in sé risplendente la sua faccia,
 Che tutta quella faccia illuminò.
 Di ragionare con lei corun piacevole,
 Quelle ispirar, e niente non parlò.
 Rimase eorum ch'lor si consolato,
 Il primo un Angel in Gesù mandato.

SANTA ZITA and the Angel.

THE COLONEL'S LEAVE.

IL CONGEDO DAL COLONELLO.

Sor Colonello, mi da il congedo,
Per andar a ca';
C'è la mia amorosa
Ch' a letto sta mà.

Il congeda ti sia già dato,
Pur che ci va,
Pur che ci va in compagnia
De' bravi soldà'.

Quando furon dentro il castello,
Sentiron suonar :
È la campana della mia amorosa,
Me la vanno a portar.

II.

THE BALLAD OF
SANTA ZITA.



I.

O Light of lights, Redeemer of mankind,
Whose glory most in mercy shines displayed,
Concede Thy favour to my humble mind,
Increase my feeble memory with Thine aid,
My heart to-day some fitting words would find,
To tell of Zita, Lucca's holy maid:
That Christians all may read her life, and how
She sleeps in old San Frediano now.

II.

And so, O Light Divine, I turn to Thee.
Refuse me not the mercy I implore!
But grant me, all unworthy though I be,
To tell in rhyme the tale oft told before.
Without Thy help, too hard it were for me
Even to begin; oh give me from Thy store
A little wisdom; on Thy grace I wait,
While I this holy, humble life relate.

THE COLONEL'S LEAVE.

COLONEL, give me leave a little,
That I home may go:
For my love in bed lies fading,
Sick, and sinking low.

Leave to go I give thee,
Also shalt thou have
With thee, for thine honour,
Brothers of the brave.

As they reached the village,
All the bells did ring:
'These are the bells for my true love,
News of death they bring.'

III.

Or diam principio àlla gentil Istoria,
Di Santa Zita, gloriosa e pia.
Acciò ch'ognuno ne tenghi memoria,
Saper dove gl'è è'nata e d'onde sia.
Quella, che gode or l'eterna gloria,
Con altre verginelle in compagnia,
Nacque di Lucca nel felice stato,
In una villa detta Monsagrato.

IV.

Fu questo l'anno di Nostro Signore,
Cioè nel mille dugento diciotto,
Venne al mondo così nobil fiore
Di buona gente ognun assai rimoto.
Una Sorella avea di grand 'onore,
Religiosa; e dal mondo discosto;
Il Padre suo, Giovan Lombardo detto;
Uomo da bene, e di molto rispetto.

V.

La madre che la fece, era sì buona,
Di giorno in giorno sempre più l'amava.
Vedendo crescere sì la sua persona
In buon costumi, e sempre Iddio invocava.
Della virginità portò corona,
In Chiesa sempre ritirata stava
A contemplar d' Iddio la sua passione
Con cuor contrito e con gran divozione.

Fermati, fermati pur un tantino,
Riposati un po'!
Vo' dar un bacio alla mia amorosa,
E poi me ne vo.

Parlami, parlami, bocchin d'amore,
Parlami un po'!
Tu non vedi che l'è estinta,
Parlar non ti può.

Addio Padre, addio mia Madre,
Addio fratei!
Se ci fusse la mia amorosa
Contento sarei.

III.

So listen kindly, friends, and I will tell,
The story of our saint, now raised so high :
And first I pray you to remember well
Her birthplace. . . . To our city it lies nigh.
She who doth in the eternal glory dwell,
With other virgin saints above the sky,
Was born, long since, in Lucca's happy state,
At Monsagrato, so old books relate.

IV.

'Twas in the year twelve hundred and eighteen
This noble flower blossomed first on earth :
And in a poor man's household was she seen,
A household poor in gold, but rich in worth.
Her elder sister led a life serene
Within a convent, ere Saint Zita's birth.
Giovan Lombardo was the father styled,
A worthy parent of a saintly child.

V.

Her mother was so good, that every day
She loved her better, seeing how she grew
In fear of God, and walking in His way
From earliest childhood, with devotion true.
Prayer was her great delight, she loved to stay
In church alone, and dream of all she knew
Of how God lived on earth, and how He died ;
Until her heart could hold no dream beside.

Stay, poor soldier, rest a little,
Weary must you be.
I will kiss my love and leave her,
There's no rest for me.

Little mouth, so loving,
Speak to me, I pray!
Never more those lips can open,
Life has passed away.

Farewell father, mother, brothers,
Said he as he went,
If my love were with me
I were well content.

VI.

Racconta il libro, Zita avea uno zio,
Uomo da bene, e di gran santitade;
Armato stava nel timor di Dio,
Di Fede, di Speranza e Caritade.
In ogni op̃era buona avea il desio,
Assai amava lui la povertade.
Non nominava mai Iddio in vano;
Per nome chiamato era lui Graziano.

VII.

Torniamo a Zita che già cresciut' era,
Con gran pensiero di servire Iddio;
Orando sempre la mattina e sera,
Il mondo lei s'avea preso in oblio.
Un di pensando con ben mesta cera,
“Adesso levo il pane al Padre mio;
Concedimi Signor, ch'io vada a stare,
In Lucca, questo vitto a guadagnare.”

VIII.

Padre e Madre, ognun da Dio spirato,
Andò a Zita e disse: Vuoi venire,
A Lucca a stare in un nobil casato?
Poichè vediam, che vuoi a Dio servire;
Questo sia il luogo per te apparecchiato,
Dove portrai ben vivere e morire.
Zita rispose: per amor di Dio,
Di grazia andiamo, caro Padre mio.

THE STORY OF FAUSTINA.

IN that little group about the S. Marcello fountain there is a girl who has a story so very sad that I have been much inclined to leave it out, and would have done so, only it is about the conscription, and I have not told anything about the conscription yet, which is the ruin of so many families, and which I hate more than I do anything else almost in the world. People say that I ought not to hate it, that it is a useful and necessary institution; and if I ever begin to say what I think about it, they only laugh at it, and have not patience to answer me, nor even to listen to what I say. And because I am tired of being laughed at, I do not talk about it any more; but I should like just once to tell a little, not of what I think, but of what I know, about it, and so I am going now to tell about Faustina Petrucci.

She is one of the two girls who are standing talking together, with children in their arms, near the fountain in the picture. She is the one who stands nearest the fountain, and I drew her as she was tending a friend's baby (poor little Eugenia, who only lived for a few years; she is the baby in the yellow dress) and

VI.

An uncle Zita had, of whom they tell,
That every virtue did his soul attire,
Faith, charity, and hope, did with him dwell,
And holy works were all his heart's desire.
Poor, yet content, God's name he honoured well,
Nor did to aught of earthly good aspire.
A man of humble life, and saintly fame;
And Graziano was this uncle's name.

VII.

Time passed, the girl grew older, well content
To do God's work, whate'er that work might be.
Her brightest hours on her knees were spent,
And little thought of worldly things had she.
One day to saddening care her mind was lent:
"I eat my father's bread, he works for me!"
She raised her heart in prayer: "O Lord," she said,
"To Lucca let me go, and earn my bread."

VIII.

And He who hears in secret, heard that prayer:
For both her parents came, the selfsame day,
And asked her, "Daughter, would'st thou now prepare
As servant in a noble house to stay?
For since to serve the Lord is all thy care,
In Lucca hath He marked thee out thy way.
There may'st thou live, there labour and there die."
"Thank God! So be it!" Zita made reply.

talking with the S. Marcello caffettiere's daughter, who had come out of her father's shop with her little sister in her arms. Faustina was the daughter of a Piansinatico man, a cousin of Pietro Petrucci of whom I have just written, and was the only girl in a large family of boys. She was not pretty, and when I knew her she was yellow and sickly, but she had much grace in all her ways, and no one could help liking her. She had uncommon intelligence: in her childhood she had been taught to read, nothing more; and she taught herself to write, fairly well, without help from any one. Afterwards she taught herself to read French, all by herself, with the help of an old school-book which some stranger passing through the place had left behind. She read all the books that came in her way, and remembered everything in them; so that, when I first knew her, she had a very curious collection in her head of things true and false. But the one thing for which Faustina was remarkable, and which made her different from every one else, was her musical nature; I call it a musical nature, because it was much more than a musical talent, which many people have; she seemed as if she were all full of music, it was more natural to her than language; whenever she felt anything deeply, instead of speaking, she would begin, it seemed to me without knowing it, to sing some song which had a bearing on it. Her voice, whether in singing or speaking, was one of the sweetest that ever a woman had.

IX.

Trovato il luogo ove Zita ha da stare
Addomandata casa Fantinelli:
Nobili Signori son da praticare,
I lor figliuoli saran come fratelli:
Faranno sempre Zita rispettare,
Benefattori son de' poverelli.
Zita ringrazia Iddio di tal ventura;
Da fatigarsi subito procura.

X.

Zita dal Padre suo prese licenza;
Disseglì, 'Adesso a casa ve n'andate.'
Entrata in casa, fece riverenza
Davanti a tutte quante le brigate.
Con gli occhi bassi, sempre con temenza,
Le sue fatiche sempre anticipate;
Ascoltando la Messa ogni Mattina
Per contemplar quella Bontà Divina.

XI.

Di dodici anni si mise a servire
In questa casa con molta affezione;
Nè mai ci fu chi le potesse dire,
Tu non fai quel che vuole il tuo padrone.
Andava pura e onesta nel vestire,
Non si curava mai di cose buone.
Sol le bastava ricoprir sua vita
Di cose vili, e sempre scalza è ita.

In every way, Faustina was much removed from commonplace people; and sometimes I have thought that she had considerable greatness of character (if I know what greatness of character means), though I never heard any one say that about Faustina. But I know that when a poor girl at S. Marcello was dying of a complaint that was considered contagious, and every one was afraid to go near her, and her poor mother was worn almost to death trying to take care of her all alone, Faustina went to the house, as soon as she heard about it, and did everything, although she was far from strong; and when the girl was not able to rest in any position in her bed, Faustina would sit on the bed and hold her in her arms, and there she could sleep when she could not sleep anywhere else. With all this, Faustina was a very lively, entertaining companion, all the time finding something to laugh at, or to make others laugh at, with a certain peculiar drollery about her which all her troubles have never been able quite to extinguish.

Now Faustina used often to go and stay with an old aunt at S. Marcello: her father had married a second wife, and though Faustina did not quarrel with her stepmother, I do not think there was any great love lost between them. And it was when she was staying with this old aunt that Beppe Fini fell in love with her. He was only eighteen then; she, I believe, a year older. Beppe was an orphan boy, and had nothing excepting a little linen and furniture which he had inherited

IX.

They reached the house for Zita's home designed,
And Casa Fantinelli was its name.
A family of noble life and mind
Dwelt in it, when the saintly maiden came.
Just to their servants,—to the needy, kind.
With them her life could pass, almost the same
As with her parents. She, rejoiced indeed,
Gave thanks to God who did such grace concede.

X.

The door once reached, she let her father go ;
'They said farewell, then parted ; and this done,
She entered in, and bowed herself full low
Before the Fantinelli, every one :
Thenceforward toiling humbly ; none might know
How long she worked before the morning sun :
Content each day, might only time remain
'To hear the Mass ; then back to work again.

XI.

At twelve years old she did to service go,
And ever after in that house she stayed,
With love unwearied, which no change could know :
Her master's word she never disobeyed.
A humble mind her very looks might show,
So poor was all the dress of this poor maid !
The meanest garment pleased her best to wear,
And all the whole year round her feet were bare.

from his parents. But he had inherited also singular beauty; and he had the polite and rather dignified manners which I have often observed among the S. Marcello people. I do not know how he ever came to fall in love with that little ugly droll Faustina, but that he did so, and that his affection for her was very deep and unchanging, is certain. I think that the charm at first was in her singing, for Beppe was a born musician, like herself, and could sing almost as well as she could, and used to play the clarionet in the San Marcello band. And he and she used to sing together, and he used to play to her, and they were both as happy as the day is long. They thought then that they should be married as soon as he had passed the conscription, and though they knew that they should be very poor, they were willing to face it, for the sake of being together. Faustina was a dressmaker, and could earn enough for her share of the housekeeping expenses. But as soon as her family knew of the engagement, trouble began. Her aunt, after trying in vain to reason her out of so imprudent an attachment, sent her home to her father at Piansinatico; and he was very angry, forbade her seeing Beppe any more, and had some violent scenes with her, which had no effect excepting to terrify her and make her ill. Her great misfortune was that she had another admirer, whom she did not care for, but whom her relations wished her to marry, because he had a little money.

XII.

Diero i padroni piena autoritade,
Niente in casa a Zita si serrasse ;
Abbi ogni cosa in sua libertade,
Ed a suo posto meglio governasse.
Zita, che de' poveri avea pietade,
Con diligenza lei ben rassettasse.
Molte cose che in casa avanzava,
Quelle raccoglie, e ai poveri le dava.

XIII.

Da i suoi padroni li furono date
Di molte robe per il suo vestire :
Voglian che per lei siano accomodate,
Per la gran fedeltà del suo servire.
Ed umilmente lei l'ha ringraziate,
Pigliò la roba con molto desire.
Tosto che l'ebbe li venne in desio,
Di darla a'poveri per l'amor di Dio.

XIV.

E spesse volte lei cercando andava,
Se per contrada fosse un ammalato.
Se povero era, bene l'aiutava,
Del proprio cibo suo che l'era dato,
Per dare a quello, lei digiuna stava,
Purchè avesse il povero ajutato.
E de suoi panni li volea vestire
Sempre cercando per Gesu patire.

XII.

Her master and her mistress orders gave,
That 'Zita should in all things have her way ;
Left all in 'Zita's hand to spend or save,
And told her, " Do for us as best you may ! "
And she, with care, and with attention grave,
Gave heed that nought were lost or thrown away ;
But many things which wasted were before,
She gathered up, and gave them to the poor.

XIII.

The noble family with whom she dwelt,
Did many garments give for 'Zita's wear :
For all within the house great kindness felt
For her who served them with such loving care.
She thanked them humbly, yet her heart would melt,
For longing with the poor such gifts to share.
And as she could, in secret, day by day,
For love of God she gave the best away.

XIV.

And often through the country far she sought,
If any sick in lonely cottage pined ;
She helped them in their need, and to them brought
Of her own food, the best her hand could find :
And clothed them with her garments, caring nought
For cold or hunger, but with willing mind
Gave all, and did her chiefest pleasure take,
In toil and hardship for the dear Lord's sake.

XV.

Andava spesso Zita a visitare
Negli Spedali i poveri ammalati;
E qualche cosa li solea portare;
Ed ancora a i poveri carcerati.
Anco le chiese voleva onorare,
Sebbene da sua casa allontanati;
Non si curando d'esser conosciuta
Per far le sue orazioni comè dovuta.

XVI.

Ogni notte in sull 'ora del mattutino,
Subito desta a San Frediano andava;
Era la Chiesa presso a lei vicino,
Cioè, alla casa, dove per serva stava.
Andava a sentire l'Uffizio Divino,
Ritirata, il suo Gesù guardava,
Pensando sempre alla sua passione,
E così stava con gran divozione.

XVII.

Avendo una mattina dimorato,
In questa sua santa devozione,
Zita di faro il pan s'era scordato,
Per aver posto a Dio tant' affezione.
E tosto ch'ebbe il suo perdon pigliato,
Di tal cosa li venne in menzione.
A casa se n'andò con molta fretta.
A dover far il pan Zita aspetta,—

xv.

So would she visit in her loving care,
The hospital, and all who in it lay;
Or those in prison would her kindness share;
Or to some church, it might be far away,
At times with thankful heart she would repair,
Where, all unseen, unnoticed, she could pray.
For more she loved to be with God alone,
Than have by others her devotions known.

xvi.

And every morning, when but first awake,
To San Frediano straight her way she made,
For early matins, ere the day could break
('Twas near the house where she as servant stayed)
Her place there in a corner she would take,
And listen till the Service all was said.
In holy contemplation lost, until
'Twas time her morning duties to fulfil.

xvii.

It chanced one day,—and only one, 'tis said,—
That Zita lingered, being lost in prayer,
And quite forgot she had not made the bread,
Which on that morning should have been her care.
Till, service over, as she homeward sped,
She recollected and would now repair
Her error, so ran quickly all the way,
To make the bread, which must be baked that day.

XVIII.

Zita fatto e coperto quello vede,
E sopra della tavola era accommodato :
Che dai padroni fatto lei lo crede,
La prese, portandolo al forno diviato.
Tornata a casa pur nessun non vede,
Che nessun dal letto anco è levato.
Zita ringrazia il suo dolce Signore,
Che gli Angeli han fatto tal favore.

XIX.

Essendo la Pasqua del Nostro Signore,
Della nascita del verbo Divino ;
Con aspro freddo, e con tale stridore
Faceva andare ognuno a capo chino.
Zita, ch'è innamorata del Signore,
Essendo giunta l'ora di mattutino,
Si mise in punto per volervi andare,
E dal Padrone fa fatta fermare.

XX.

Rimase di ciò Zita tutta mesta,
Sperando non lasciar tal devozione
Non si curava di freddo e di tempesta,
Purché licenza abbia dal suo Padrone.
Questo si tolse una pelliccia in vesta
Vista di Zita la disposizione.
Disseli: In dosso questa porterai,
Fuori che a me, a nessuno la darai.

XVIII.

But on the table what did she behold?
The loaves all there, a cloth above them laid.
At sight of which was Zita much consoled,
Not doubting but her mistress had them made:
But no, the house was silent; young and old
Had slept, while Zita in the church delayed.
She could but thank her Lord, with heart content,
Who by His angels had this favour sent.

XIX.

One festa, 'twas the day when Christ was born,
When most in church all Christians love to meet;
An ice-cold wind, that freezing winter morn,
Made all men go with heads down, in the street.
When Zita, with her garment poor and worn,
But heart all glowing with devotion sweet,
Set out for matins ere the break of day,
Her master called her back, and bade her stay.

XX.

Full sad she was to lose the morning prayer,
On Christmas day of all days, and did so
Entreat her master, though the snow-filled air
Was piercing cold. At length he let her go.
But, taking off the cloak himself did wear,
He did it kindly on her shoulders throw.
“Wear this,” he said, “what time thou wilt remain
In church, but bring it safe to me again.”

XXI.

Zita la prenda con piacevolezza,
Tosto spiegando l'orazione a Dio,
A me, Signor, è troppa commodezza,
Tutta quanta contro il voler mio :
Abbi pietà della mia Fanciullezza,
Di patir per Te è il mio desio ;
Poichè in tal notte, Signor glorioso,
Venisti al mondo per darci riposo.

XXII.

Con quella veste andò per obbedire
Il suo Padron che gliel' avea prestata
Purchè il mattutino lei possa sentire,
Non temendo nè freddo nè brinata.
Entrando in chiesa con suo buon desire,
Nell' amore di Dio ben riscaldata,
S'incontrò in un povero mal vestito,
Tutto tremante dal freddo smarrito.

XXIII.

Zita li venne di cio compassione :—
Chiamollo a se, dicendo, ' Fratel mio,
Tien questa veste ch'è del mio padrone.
La terrai in dosso fin che sto qui io ;
Non vo'lasciamo questa divozione ;
Accompagnamoci con l'amor di Dio.
Finito il mattutin meco verrai ;
In casa del mio padron ti scalderei.'

XXI.

She thanked her master, and with heart content,
Set off for church amid the driving storm;
With soul uplifted, praying as she went;
And in these words her prayer at length took form.
“O Lord, behold the cloak my master lent;
Too fine it is for me, too soft and warm;
Forgive me if I wear it on the night
When Thou didst leave Thy glory and Thy light.

XXII.

“The night when Thou wast born on earth so poor,
To give us peace; but, Lord, 'tis not my will,
Thou knowest I would willingly endure
More than this cold, Thy pleasure to fulfil!
So help me, keep me in thy love secure!”
Just then the church she entered, praying still,
And by the door a beggar, weak and old,
In scanty garments stood, half dead with cold.

XXIII.

She looked awhile, her heart with pity led,
Then called him, saying: “Brother, come to me;
Come, take this cloak, and wear it in my stead;
It is not mine, or I would give it thee.
Then kneel beside me till the prayers be said;
Pray with me, and God's love shall with us be.
Then matins over, I would much desire
To lead thee home and warm thee by our fire.”

XXIV.

Un po' di vesta ella in dosso avea,
Miseramente scalza se ne stava.
Al poverello più non attendea
Ritirata il suo Signore adorava.
Le ginocchia nude in terra avea,
Con occhi bassi sempre lagrimava;
Pensando, il suo Gesù al mondo venne,
A che, per salvar noi, pene sostenne.

XXV.

Mattutin detto colla Santa Messa,
Ogni persona a casa se ne andava.
Zita verso il povero s'appressa,
Di ritrovarlo ben desiderava.
Di serrar il Sagrestan faceva gran pressa,
E Zita fuor di chiesa l'aspettava.
A casa al fuoco lo volca menare,
E la veste al suo padron volca tornare.

XXVI.

Serrò la chiesa, e fuor no'l vide riscire,
Guardò a sorte se fosse nella via;
Quando non vide il povero apparire,
Queste parole infra se dicia:
Qualcheduno al Padron l'ha fatto ridire,
Per tal causa levato a lui il sia.
Il poverin gran freddo avrà patito,
E per temenza a casa se n'è ito.

XXIV.

She said no more ; her gown was old and thin,
Her feet were bare, but little did she heed :
And, praying fervently, did soon begin
To feel her heart and spirit warm indeed
For thinking how, when we were lost in sin,
The Lord Himself had pity on our need,
And how for us, on just so cold a day,
Himself on earth, a new-born infant lay.

XXV.

Till, matins over and the mass as well,
As home from church the people turned once more,
She sought the beggar, but it now befell
The sacristan made haste to shut the door.
She waited, but he came not, strange to tell !
She sought him, as she never sought before ;
For she would lead him to her fire, and then
Would give her master back his cloak again.

XXVI.

The church was closed, she had not seen him pass,
She searched the street in trouble and dismay :
“No doubt while I was waiting at the Mass,
Some one who saw me” (thus did Zita say)
“Went home and told my master, and, alas !
He sent in haste and took the cloak away,
The beggar must have suffered much, and now
Has gone home cold and frightened, who knows how.”

XXVII.

Alzando Zita gli occhi verso il Cielo,
Dicendo ; Iddio non mi abbandonare !
Se quella veste al padron non rivelo,
Non so in che modo potermi scusare,
Della sua roba sempre avrò gran zelo,
Non si potrà di Zita più fidare.
Starà sempre in pena non dia via ;
Di questo potria nascer qualche cosa ria.

XXVIII.

Mentre che Zita in casa se n'entrava
Ecco venirli incontro il suo padrone !
Se avea la veste ben lui la guardava,
Non li diè punto di soddisfazione :
Con essa Zita il Padrone razionava,
Facendoli di molta riprensione.
Mentre il padrone con lei contendea,
Giunse il mandato che la veste avea.

XXIX.

Portava quella sopra le sue braccia,
Dettela a Zita, e quella ringraziò :
Era sì resplendente la sua faccia
Che tutta quella faccia illuminò.
Di ragionar con seco ognun procaccia,
Quello disparve, e mente non parlò.
Rimase ognun di lor sì consolato,
Li parve un Angel da Gesù mandato.

XXVII.

Then said she (while new terror filled her breast),
“O Lord, I pray Thee do not me forsake!
Perhaps 'tis lost, and all must be confessed,
And I shall have but poor excuse to make.
Oh help me! I can have nor peace nor rest
Until I find, and to my master take,
The cloak which, wrongly, I the beggar lent!”
Thus saying, heavy-hearted, home she went.

XXVIII.

But just as Zita, trembling, passed the door,
Her master met her, and with searching eye
He looked to see if still the cloak she wore:
’Twas gone! at which his anger rose so high,
With bitter words he did his rage outpour,
And sharp reproof, while she made no reply.
But while in loud and angry voice he spoke,
Behold appear the beggar with the cloak!

XXIX.

Who thanking Zita kindly, as he might,
Gave back the cloak like one in haste to go—
His face all changed, and shone with heavenly light,
And lighted hers, with its reflected glow.
They tried to speak, but he had passed from sight.
No beggar he, of those that walk below!
Great comfort had he left their hearts within,
An angel of the Lord had with them been.

xxx.

Zita ringraziava il Signor glorioso,
Di tanto beneficio, e sì gran dono.
Col volto mesto tutto lagrimoso.
E di tal fallo domanda perdono.
Il padron di tal cosa fu pietoso ;
Disse : ‘ Di questo più non ti ragiono :
Seguita, Zita, il servizio di Dio,
Non farai niente contro il voler mio.’

xxxI.

Non dette mai al suo corpo riposo,
Cercando sempre qualche divozione,
Per servire al suo Signore glorioso :
Giaceva in terra sopra del mattone ;
Parevali quel letto assai gioioso,
Più di quello che l’ha dato il padrone,
Adorna di matrazze e di linzuola,
In una cameretta per lei sola.

xxxII.

Quel letto Zita lo faceva servire,
A qualche vecchierello poverino,
Che non avesse dove ire a dormire,
O fosso viandante, o pellegrino.
Seco alla stanza lo faceva venire,
Sempre invocando il Salvator Divino ;
Dicendo ; ‘ Padre mio, qui riposate,
E per i miei Padroni Iddio pregate.’

XXX.

Great thanks did Zita render for such grace,
To Him from whom alone deliverance came:
Then looking tearful in her master's face,
Asked pardon for her fault, with humble shame.
He answered wondering: "Zita, in this case
I cannot speak, and have no heart to blame.
Go on and serve the Lord, and as for me,
I'll not forbid whate'er the service be."

XXXI.

Her only thought was how to serve God best;
And for her body ever less she cared,
When, late at night, she laid her down to rest,
The pavement was her only couch prepared.
It felt not hard, such peace her soul possessed.
Her bed was all for better service spared
(For she'd a chamber, for herself alone,
And bed, with sheets and matrass, all her own).

XXXII.

When evening came, she to her chamber led
Such aged stranger as she chanced to meet,
Some traveller who had neither roof nor bed,
Or pilgrim waiting homeless in the street.
"Here, father, rest thee till the morn," she said,
"The room is thine, and may thy sleep be sweet;
I leave thee here in peace until the day;
But for my master and his household pray."

XXXIII.

Sopra una tavola Zita in terra stava,
Giacendo sino all 'or di Mattutino:
In su quell 'ora alla Chiesa andava,
Al chiaro giorno tornava al poverino:
Entrata in casa quello salutava,
Dicendo: Iddio vi doni buon cammino!
Andate colla pace del Signore,
Iddio vi salvi, e guardi a tutte l'ore.

XXXIV.

Accostandosi a Zita un pellegrino,
Che per il caldo lui gran sete aveva.
Ognun di loro al pozzo era vicino,
E Zita che dell acqua ne traeva.
Chiedendole da ber quel poverino,
Ed umilmente Zita rispondeva
Aspetta Fratel mio, la vo a cavare,
Perchè del vino non ti posso dare.

XXXV.

Volgendo Zita l'orazione a Dio
Fè sopra l'acqua il segno della croce:
Che fosse vino avrei molto desio,
Disse, 'bevete,' a lui con bassa voce.
Orando Zita disse, 'Signor mio,
Fate quest 'acqua al povero non nuoce!'
Così cominciò a ber quel pellegrino:
Gustando disse, 'E prezioso vino!'

XXXIII.

So on the ground she laid her, and would sleep,
Till the bell sounding called her up to prayer.
Then, off to church, while yet the shades were deep,
The early blessing of the morn to seek.
But home by day-light, up the stairway steep,
To the small chamber and her pilgrim there.
“Farewell, and peace go with thee!” would she say:
“God keep thee safe, and prosper all thy way!”

XXXIV.

A pilgrim poor to Zita came one day,
All faint and thirsty with the summer heat,
And for a little water did he pray—
’Twas close beside the well they chanced to meet—
She feared to give it, yet what could she say?
She answered humbly, and with words discreet:
“I wish, my brother, I could give thee wine,
But if the water please thee, that is thine.”

XXXV.

This said, she drew some water from the well,
And with a cross the pitcher she did sign.
“O Lord,” she said, while low her sweet voice fell,
“Let not this water hurt him, he is thine.”
The pilgrim, as he stooped to drink, could tell
Her thought before she spoke, “I wish ’twere wine.”
He tasted, then astonished raised his head:
“But, truly, this *is* precious wine!” he said.

XXXVI.

In questi versi voglio raccontare,
La grand' umiltà della Beata Zita :
Se ciaschedun di voi vorrà ascoltare,
In questa istoria averà sentita.
Tutte le colpe si volea chiamare,
Per fare che la casa fosse unita ;
Il padron di tal fatto s'avvedea,
Per lei restando più non contendea.

XXXVII.

Sempre ha servito con amor perfetto,
E di patir per se sempre cercava ;
Piccoli e grandi serva con rispetto,
Il nome di Maria sempre onorara,
Zita infermossi, e posta nel suo letto,
I Santi Sacramenti domandava,
Ch'era venuto il fin della sua vita,
Da questo mondo avea da far partita.

XXXVIII.

Non fu sì tosto il sacerdote giunto,
Che Zita a tutti domanda perdono.
Presto sarà questo corpo defunto :
A Dio vi lascio, caro mio padrone.
Zita arrivata a quell' ultimo punto,
Più non potea stare in ginocchione.
Rese l'anima a Dio con un sospiro,
Li Angeli al Cielo la porton di tiro.

XXXVI.

So great was her humility, that though
Unjustly blamed, she never would complain
For faults she suffered, not her own, if so
The household might in greater peace remain.
This, in long years, her master came to know,
And did thenceforth from all hard words refrain,
For pity, seeing how the sound of strife
Was heavy shadow on that gentle life.

XXXVII.

So in her master's service and God's fear,
The years of labour slowly passed away.
The name of Mary, ever blest and dear,
Had cheered her in her toil from day to day.
Then sickness came, and when the end drew near,
As worn and feeble on her bed she lay,
She sought the Sacraments, for well she knew
The journey of her life was almost through.

XXXVIII.

The priest arrived, and she, her sins confessed,
Forgiveness of all present did demand.
"Farewell," she said, "I'm going to my rest,
Dear master, but I leave thee in God's hand."
No other word to any she addressed;
While weeping all did round about her stand,
Her soul to God she rendered with one sigh,
And angels bore her to her home on high.

XXXIX.

Non fu sì tosto l'anima spirata,
Per Lucca i putti si sentian gridare,
Adesso è morta la Zita beata,
A Casa Fantinelli vogliamo andare.
Si vide il giorno una stella onorata,
Sopra la casa risplendente stare,
Questo si nota fosse chiaro segno,
L'anima fosse giunta al Santo Regno.

XL.

L'uno e l'altro si andavano a chiamare,
La Santa Zita a visitare andiamo!
L'ordine è dato si ha da sotterrare,
Chi andava a casa, e chi a S. Frediano.
Ognun cercava potersi accostare,
Chi per vederla, e chi bacciar sua mano.
Molti per accostarsi gran forza facea,
Per torli un po' di quel ch'attorno avea.

XLI.

Zita, per Lucca tua città famosa,
Prega quanto tu puoi l'eterno Iddio;
Della grazia sua ne sia copiosa;
Ed adempisci d'ognuno il buon desio,
Per quella libertà ch'è l'alta cosa!
Questo è quanto desidera il cuor mio.
Prega per grazia il tuo caro Signore,
Ci salvi, e guardi, a tutte quanto l'ore.

XXXIX.

That very hour in which her spirit fled,
Young children through the town began to say
(Before they heard), "The blessed Zita's dead!"
And crowd about the house wherein she lay.
A star appeared, and did much radiance shed,
O'er Casa Fantinelli at mid-day;
Which was to all a clear and certain sign
Her soul had joined the company divine.

XL.

But hardly could they bear her to her grave,
The crowd of mourning people was so great;
Some thronged her chamber, one more look to crave,
While others did in San Frediano wait,
To kiss her hand, or some memorial save,
Their sorrow to console or consecrate.
Her very garments in the press were torn,
That each might have some fragment she had worn.

XLI.

Zita, for Lucca, thy beloved town,
Pray God,—and surely He thy prayer will hear,—
To send on us from heaven a blessing down,
That we may serve Him, safe from every fear;
And grant us still (my heart's desire to crown)
That liberty which is to all so dear.
For this we labour all, for this we pray,
So help us with thy prayers from day to day.

XLII.

Per quel rispetto che ti fu portato,
Da que nobili Signor de Fantinelli;
Prega per loro quel verbo Incarnato,
Della sua grazia non siano ribelli.
E così ancor per ogni potentato,
Si ami l'uno e l'altro da fratelli.
Pregalo, Zita, questo tuttavia,
Acciò che tra i Cristiani non sia eresia.

XLIII.

Il di che morì, finisco tal tenore,
D' Aprile il ventisette l'ottantotto,
Da te fa il conto benigno lettore,
Mille dugento finisce tal motto.
Ogni fedele se la tenghi al cuore,
La Santa Serva, a lei sia suo divoto:
Il cammin dritto a noi ci ha mostrato,
Da condurci a quel felice stato.

XLIV.

Se ciò non fosse come hai tu desio,
Prego lettor mi voglia perdonare:
Per esser debol l'intelletto mio,
Non posso ogni persona contentare.
A te mi volto, glorioso Iddio,
Con tutto il cuore Ti voglio pregare;
Chi della tua serva ha divozione,
Lo salvi, e guardi da tribolazione.

XLII.

And do not, Zita, in thy prayer forget
To name the Fantinelli's noble race;
Their love to thee do thou remember yet,
And may God keep them ever in His grace.
Pray for all princes that the Lord may set
Their hearts in peace, and discord find no place:
And for the Church, to dwell in faith sincere,
That every heresy may disappear.

XLIII.

And now to end my tale, I must relate,
'Twas April on the twenty-seventh day,
And in the year twelve hundred eighty-eight,
That she from earth to heaven was borne away.
Which day returning, still we celebrate;
And let each faithful soul due honour pay
To her whose life has made the way so plain,
The blessed country of our hope to gain.

XLIV.

Now if these rhymes displease thee, reader kind,
Have patience with them, they were rightly meant.
But (being neither wise nor strong of mind),
I cannot always every one content.
Thou Lord of glory, for whose praise designed
Was all the story, to my prayer consent.
Let all who to thy Saint devotion bear
Be safe from harm and danger in Thy care.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE chosen, partly of purpose, partly of necessity, in arranging subjects for the beginning of the series, the feeblest of these wayside Songs, and the reader may be at first disappointed by its extreme simplicity, and often quite prosaic phrase. Let me assure him, with the authority of long practice, both in prose and rhyme,—(for I wasted several good years of my life in verse-writing when I had nothing to say),—that it is not at all an easy matter to write entirely rhythmic lines of this straightforward intelligibility; and that there are twenty versifiers nowadays who can string together any quantity of symphonious twaddle and alliterate whine, for one who can write a rhythmic line in steady English, with some contents of common sense in it. Note also, that if you read Francesca's verses with sincerely attentive feeling, just as you would read, or ought to read, well-constructed prose, they will become melodious without your well knowing why; and note further, and carefully, that the additions she has made to her original, apparently only to fill the measure, are all additions of extreme value and enriched meaning.

Thus, in the 5th stanza, the Italian entirely common phrase, “con gran divozione,” is expanded into “until her heart could hold no dream beside,” which expresses the peculiar character of Zita’s piety through all her life.

Again, in the 21st, the reader might fancy the Italian “glorioso” a vague epithet of Christ, unless Francesca had expanded it into, “On the night, when *thou didst leave* thy glory.”

And again in the 35th, Zita says in the Italian, only, “My Lord, let not this water hurt the *poor* man.” Francesca beautifully transmutes this into, “Let not this water hurt him,—*he is thine.*”

Of the Italian itself, I am no judge, and had thought it nothing worse than a little flat, and, here and there, a little obscure; but on my questioning Francesca how she got her date of 1288 out of the 43rd stanza, she tells me “it bears about the same relation to good Italian that one of the negro songs does to good English. At the end of the first line the word *tenore* is used for *discourse*; at the end of the fourth line, the word *motto* means ‘saying,’ or sentence; (we have the same word, *motto*, in English, in a very slightly different sense;) so that the verse, translated literally, would read: ‘The day she died, (so) I finish this discourse, (was, April 27th, the (year) 88. Count it up yourself, kind reader, 1290 finishes the sentence.’ I think the writer meant to say that she died in 1288.”

The following passage from a subsequent letter sets us finally right about the connection of the four miracles,—the Pythagorean addition of the pulse to the corn fulfilling the idea of sustenance to all mankind:—

May 15th, 1884.

“ I also made a little mistake in what I told you myself, about the miracle of the grain which she gave away being replaced in the granary; in the Tuscan version they were *beans* which were multiplied. Pretty much the same story is told about a great many saints; the prettiest version is that of St. Isidore, the Spanish Contadino, which I will tell you some time, if you do not know it. I enjoy this page of yours about St. Zita so much more the more I read it; but who wrote that beautiful French sentence about the old housekeeper? Our friend Count Pasolini, with whom we are staying, lost an old servant, last year, at the age of a hundred years and four months. She was quite childish and helpless, but he took her death so much to heart that it made him quite ill, and put off a journey, at much inconvenience, that he might not miss attending her funeral.”

I am glad of this anecdote, because in my first notes I dwelt only on the lesson of the story to Servants; and not at all on what perhaps we English stand somewhat more in need of—its lesson to Masters! All the “flunkey” ism and “servant-gal” ism of modern

days, is the exact reflection of the same qualities in the masters and mistresses. A gentleman always makes his servant gentle. One fact which happened to myself I thankfully here relate, in memory of the relations existing between my dear friend Mr. Rawdon Brown of Venice, an Englishman of the old school, and his servant-friend Antonio, (of whom, and his pet dog, see farther "Fors," No. 75).

There are none of the rewarding accidents of my life's work in which I take so much pride as in having discovered the inscription addressed to the merchants of the Venetian Exchange on the church of St. James of the Rialto. I had photographed it with the end of the church in which it was imbedded, submitting passively to the concealment of a letter by the descending water-pipe of a neighbouring house, which I had no hope of getting the owner to bend out of the way. When I took my photograph to Mr. Brown, Antonio was instantly summoned to share in our common triumph over this recovery of a most precious Venetian monument. Antonio examined the photograph gravely, but with qualified approbation. Putting his finger on the intrusive water-pipe, he enquired why I had not removed it before taking the plate. On my expressing doubt of the householder's permission, Antonio somewhat contemptuously requested me to leave the conduct of the affair with *him*; took a photographer and plumber with him next day to the Rialto, overawed at once

the owner of the obnoxious gutter, cut a foot of it clear away, and brought me, in due course of speediest printing, six lovely plates of the entire inscription, of which one may be seen by the curious reader at the St. George's Museum, Sheffield; and another in my schools at Oxford.

With Mr. Brown's Antonio, let me, in respectful affection, name also Mr. Henry Newman's Alessandro, and Miss Alexander's Edwige. The latter is seen with one of her children in her arms on the extreme left of the drawing of St. Zita giving alms, and both Alessandro and she are extremely useful critics on their master's and mistress's work,—Alessandro usually encouraging, but anxious; Edwige, trustful, but tenderly corrective. One day she had watched Francesca labouring long on a piece of complex foliage, with evident fatigue; the drawing also not prospering to her quiet servant's mind. At last, with mild and softly smiling reproof, "Are not you trying to do as well as the good God?" says Edwige!



THE MADONNA
and the Rich Man.

THE MADONNA AND THE RICH MAN.

LA MADONNA E IL RICCONE.



I.

LA piange, la Madonna, non ha nè pan, nè vin ;
La piange, la Madonna. Oh Dio Redentor !
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

II.

“E vai da quel riccone, che limosina ti farà ;
E vai da quel riccone.” Oh Dio Redentor !
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

III.

“Non ho nè pan nè vino Cosa ti posso
dar” ?
“Non ho nè pan nè vino.” Oh Dio Redentor !
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

THE MADONNA AND THE RICH MAN.



I.

SHE'S weeping, the Madonna, she has no bread nor
wine ;

She's weeping, the Madonna. Oh God, Redeemer, hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

II.

“Go, Lady, to that rich man, and he will give you aid ;
Go, Lady, to that rich man.” Oh God, Redeemer, hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

III.

“I've nothing here to give you, I've neither bread nor
wine ;

I've nothing here to give you.” Oh God, Redeemer,
hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

IV.

“Li bricioli del piatto Quelli mi potrai dar
Li bricioli del piatto.” Oh Dio Redentor!

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

V.

“Li bricioli del piatto, son buon per il mio can;
Li bricioli del piatto.” Oh Dio Redentor!

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

VI.

In capo alli tre giorni, il Riccone mori;

In capo alli tre giorni. Oh Dio Redentor!

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

VII.

E va, picchiar alle porte, alle porte del Paradiso;

E va picchiar alle porte. Oh Dio Redentor!

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

IV.

“Give me the broken pieces that on the plate remain ;
Give me the broken pieces.” Oh God, Redeemer, hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour’s Mother dear.

V.

“I keep the broken pieces, my dog can live on those ;
I keep the broken pieces.” Oh God, Redeemer, hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour’s Mother dear.

VI.

’Twas only three days later that rich man came to die ;
’Twas only three days later. Oh God, Redeemer, hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour’s Mother dear.

VII.

He at the gate stood knocking, high at the gate of
Heaven ;

He at the gate stood knocking. Oh God, Redeemer,
hear !

Our Lady of the rosary, or Saviour’s Mother dear.

VIII.

Disse Gesù a San Pietro, “ Chi è che picchia la ? ”

Disse Gesù a San Pietro. Oh Dio Redentor !

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

IX.

È forse quel riccone, che limosina non vuol far ?

È forse quel riccone. Oh Dio Redentor !

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

X.

Va, chiama li suoi cani, che li venghino ad apri

Va, chiama li suoi cani. Oh Dio Redentor !

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

XI.

E va, picchia alle porte, alle porte dell' Inferno ;

E va, picchia alle porte. Oh Dio Redentor

Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

VIII.

Said Jesus to S. Peter: "Who knocks there at the gate?"

Said Jesus to S. Peter. Oh God, Redeemer, hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

IX.

"Perhaps it is that rich man, who would not help the poor

Perhaps it is that rich man." Oh God, Redeemer, hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

X.

"Go, let him call his dogs then, to open him the door!
Go, let him call his dogs then." Oh God, Redeemer,
hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

XI.

He at the gate went knocking, low at the gate of Hell.
He at the gate went knocking. Oh God, Redeemer,
hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

XII.

Le porte dell' Inferno enno tutte spalancà,
Le porte dell' Inferno. Oh Dio Redentor!
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

XIII.

Fategli un letto di brace, che si possa riposar!
Fategli un letto di brace. Oh Dio Redentor!
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

XIV.

Se al mondo potessi tornare la limosina vorrei far!
Se al mondo potessi tornare. Oh Dio Redentor!
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

XV.

La foglia quando secca, non rinverdisce più;
La foglia quando secca. Oh Dio Redentor!
Regina del Rosario, oh Madre del Signor.

XII.

The gates of Hell were open, they all were open wide.
The gates of Hell were open. Oh God, Redeemer,
hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

XIII.

"A bed of coals prepare him, that he may rest thereon.
A bed of coals prepare him." Oh God, Redeemer,
hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

XIV.

"Would God to life return me, I then would help the
poor!
Would God to life return me." Oh God, Redeemer,
hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

xv.

The leaf when once 'tis faded, can ne'er grow green
again!
The leaf when once 'tis faded. Oh God, Redeemer,
hear!

Our Lady of the rosary, our Saviour's Mother dear.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE song of the Riccone will, I suppose, offend modern charity and wisdom ; I may have somewhat to say respecting it, myself, in another place ; but Francesca's book is to tell you the thoughts of the peasants of Italy, not mine. What *they* feel about it, we may enough gather from Francesca's following answer to a question of mine as to its origin.

“ All that I know of its history is, that many years ago, when we first came to these mountains, a blind old beggar man came along the road, led by a girl, I suppose his daughter, and she played on a curious little stringed instrument, of which I do not know the name, but I have often seen such in old pictures ; I think Beato Angelico painted such a one in the hand of one of his angels. And they used to sing together, very sweetly, this song of the Riccone. They went to Pian degli Ontani, where Beatrice learned the song from them, which she afterwards taught to me. It did indeed take strange possession of her imagination, and she used to sing with the tears running down her face. But you may believe me, that to hear that song sung by Beatrice's grand voice, always trembling a little as it

did when she came to the place where the Riccone was turned away from the gate of heaven, was a thing never to be forgotten."

For sequel to the song, take this further fragment:—

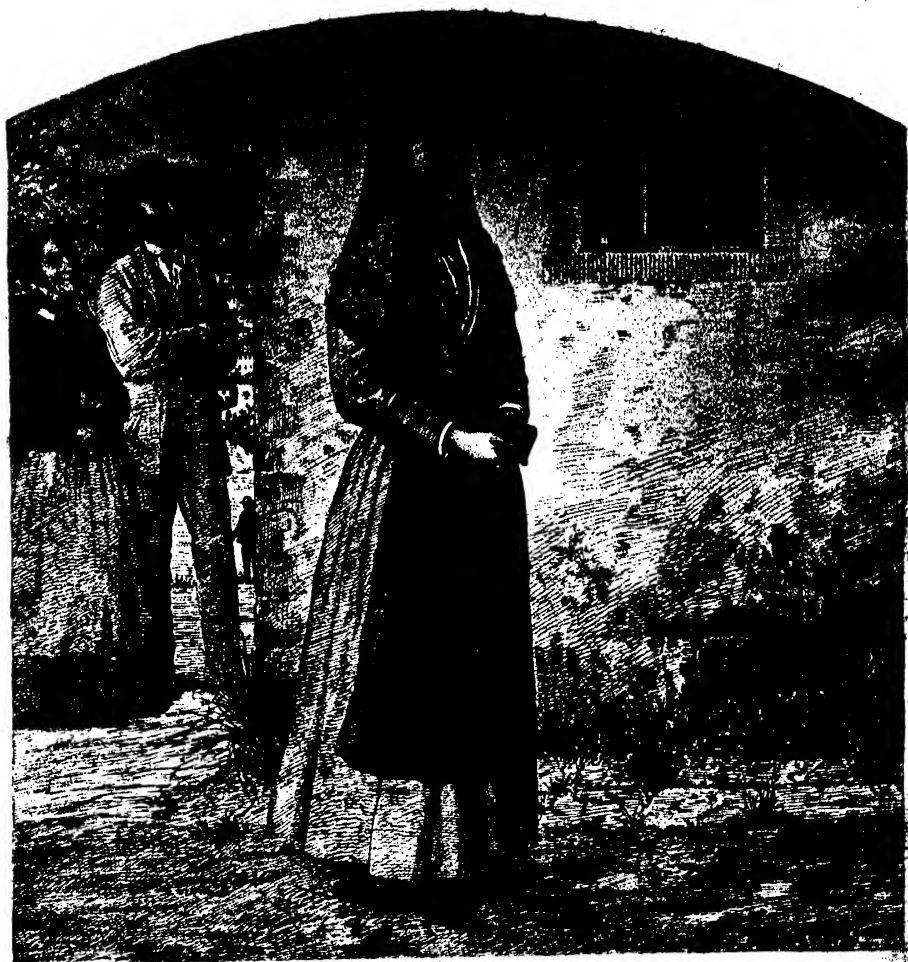
"I had a letter the other day which just went to my heart, from a young girl who works in the factory at Limestone, about fifteen miles from L'Abetone. Her father died when she was a little child, and now her mother is very ill in the hospital at S. Marcello, and the poor girl belongs to no one. I had written to ask how she was situated, and I copy for you a few words of her answer: 'I go away to my work while all the stars are in the sky, and I come back when it is so dark that I cannot see, and I am cold all the time: and I never thought that I should be all alone as I am now; and the snow is on all the ground.'

"Is not that a sad picture? I have sometimes heard an old person say, 'I am all alone,' and thought that I never heard any other words so sad as those; but only think of being 'all alone' at eighteen!"

Time was, I should have tried to be eloquent about the drawings in this number, but will leave them now to be received as they may be; repeating but once more, that in faithful expression of human feeling, there has nothing yet, that I know of, been done like them; since the masters, commonly so-called, of art, seldom aim at expression at all, and those who seek it, give momentary states of it; while the expression in both

instances, here, is of Eternal thought—the amazement, the sorrow, the judgment, in the Madonna's eyes, all of eternity,—the peace and virgin power of the pure girl, eternal also in human nature.

The reader will learn from the story of Paolina that the drawings were made from two sisters; but the Madonnina's beauty is always (as we shall find in many future instances) raised by Miss Alexander, and modified by her own imagination, according to the need. Paolina's, she tries to keep in its natural place, and often misses some of its simply mortal grace;—in no instance, she writes (page 102 below), has she been able to draw Paolina as pretty as she really is.



n Sunday morn, when you are passing near,
 From my half shut window gaze unseen,
 So fair, so good, so modest you appear,
 My heart bows down before that face serene.
 I do you reverence, and while life endures,
 My heart can hold no other love than yours.
 I do you reverence silent in my breast,
 And only in your love, my heart finds rest.



Quando passate il giorno della festa,
 Alla finestra mia fo capolino:
 Vi vedo tanto bella e tanto onesta,
 E col mio cuore a voi faccio un inchino.
 Vi faccio un inchino nel mio cuore:
 Bella, solo per voi sento l'amore.
 E vi faccio un inchino nel mio petto:
 Bella, solo per voi sento l'affetto.

Going to Church.

THE STORY OF PAOLINA.

Now I must go to another story. The pretty young girl who sits for the Madonna is named Emilia; but I must not tell the name of her family, nor where she lives, for fear that it might be heard of, and she might have as much trouble as her sister Paolina, of whom I will speak presently. I have not much to tell about Emilia (or, as we usually call her, La Madonnina); she is very beautiful, and has sat for all the Madonnas in the book.

In the little group on the fifth page, (*a*) the old woman singing rispetti was taken from Beatrice in her old age, and the two young men are uncles, and the girl a cousin, of the Madonnina. They are a handsome family, but the girl sitting in the wooden chair, whose face does not appear, deserves that I should tell a little

(*a*) The fifth page, *i.e.*, of the book as it first was arranged. I leave Francesca's notices of it, in that state, untouched; as the pages, wherever they may be in future placed, will always be registered by their original number. The seventh page, with its written rispetto, is the second photographed in this number.

about her. She is the same who is drawn on the seventh page, in the illustration to the *rispetto* :—

“Quando passate il giorno della festa.”

And afterwards her face appears several times in the course of the book. But I know that I shall lose my patience if I begin to write about her. . My poor Paolina ! . . But I must tell the story.

She is the sister of the *Madonnina*, her equal in beauty : not much wiser, I am afraid, than she, but as good, and pleasant, and sunny-tempered as it is possible for a girl to be. She lives on a beautiful farm, in a pretty little old house with a cypress tree beside it, and she is the eldest of eleven children ; and her uncle, who lives in the house, has five more :—Sixteen young people in one house, the youngest a baby, and poor Paolina the eldest ! And I have known her ever since she was a baby herself, and was never so happy as when I could have her to hold ; for she was the prettiest little doll that ever one had to play with. She was a very fair baby, with beautiful dark-blue eyes and a most angelic expression ; and she was always bandaged into a little stiff bundle, scrupulously white and clean, showing nothing but the sweet little face and two very minute dimpled hands, just the colour of a rose-leaf. I cannot remember that she ever cried, though I suppose she must have done so sometimes ; but I think she learned to smile sooner

than most children, and she would go to any one.—But there is no use in thinking about all this now; I shall never be trusted with my pretty Paolina any more, that is certain.

When she was a little larger, she used to run about the farm after her father while he worked,—barefoot, in a short blue petticoat, with a ragged straw hat set all crooked over her light hair, and he would sing stornelli (*b*) to her,—he was a beautiful singer,—or would leave his work for a minute to toss her up in his arms; and one seemed just as much a child as the other. She herself, however, began to work while she was very young; at twelve or thirteen she could do as much as her mother, or more,—farm work every day, besides what she had to do on baking-day and washing-day. But she enjoyed the work as much almost as she had the play before. She was very strong and active, and very light-hearted, and nothing ever seemed a burden to her. I think the washing-

(*b*) Stornello is a Tuscan word for a little proverbial song in three lines. Compare this manner of education with Baubie Clark's, in the pious New town of Edinburgh.

“Who gave you leave, Baubie Clark,’ went on the angry matron, ‘to make yon noise? You ought to think shame of such conduct, singing your good-for-nothing street songs like a tinkler. One would think ye wad feel glad never to hear of such things again!’”—‘Baubie Clark,’ (Blackwood, 1880), p. 40.

day was a real pleasure to her. There was a beautiful spring on the farm, and by it they had built a large stone tank to wash the clothes; and Paolina's grandfather had built a slight roof over it, and trained a grape-vine so as to form a thick canopy, that the women might be sheltered from the sun while they worked. And her father, who had a great love for flowers, had planted a jessamine, and two or three rose bushes, and some sweet-scented herbs close by, where they could be easily watered; so it was a very pretty place indeed, and she would work away there, by the half-day at once, with her bare arms in the cold water, and think it delightful.

When she came to me, which was often in those days, she was always asking for stories; but as she never cared how often she heard the same ones repeated, it was by no means difficult to entertain her. For the younger children in the family she was a perfect providence,—never tired of them, never out of patience, never too busy to attend to their wants, or comfort them in their little troubles. But Paolina had two qualities—I cannot quite call them defects,—but two qualities, which, though they made her perhaps more interesting, it would have been better for herself and others if she had not had quite so much of. One was her extreme sensibility, so extreme that it placed her at the mercy of every one, and which seemed hardly natural in that strong, healthy, busy

creature. When she came to me with the little Madonnina sometimes, I hardly knew how to please them both. The Madonnina, like many children, had a fancy for *frightful* stories, and preferred "Bluebeard," or "Marziale the Assassin," to anything else; but these stories would make the fresh colour drop out of Paolina's cheeks in a moment, and her lips tremble in a way that was painful to see. When she had to listen to any story of *real* trouble, it was worse. Sometimes at my room she would meet a child whose mother was dead, or a poor woman whose son had been taken in the conscription; and she would listen to their lamentations as long as she was able to bear it, growing paler and paler all the time, and then she would turn away and drop her face, and the tears would run down her cheeks in two streams. The other quality which I wish she had been without was her submissiveness. She would almost always do exactly what she was told, without stopping to consider very much whether the person who gave the order had any authority to give it. And this was rather a pleasant thing in her when she was a little child; but the trouble was that, when she grew older, she never knew how to change the habit. When Paolina was fifteen, a man somewhat advanced in life, who had a little money, wanted to marry her, and her parents concluded to give her to him. Of course she made no objection. I was afraid she did not quite

know her own mind, and I asked her if she liked the man. "I suppose I *shall* like him," she answered placidly, "when I have married him." After two or three months her family thought it best to break off the engagement, and of course she agreed to that too. But for some time after that she did not seem very happy. Not that she was in love with the man; she was too much a child to be in love with any one; but her very gentle spirit was troubled with the idea that he had been badly treated, and that she was in some way to blame for it.

Meanwhile she was growing tall and quite grand-looking in her vigorous beauty; other men began to admire her, and were angry because she did not encourage them. The other girls of the parish, who used to crimp their hair and cut it into fringes, and ruffle their dresses, and pinch their waists, found themselves outshone by her in her simplicity, and were jealous of her. So they all began to look out for something to say against her, and the worst they could think of was that she used often to sit to me for her portrait—a thing that *they* would not do on *any* account! They were safe in saying so; I should never have asked them. But this was no great thing; unfortunately she did something about that time which was considered much more disgraceful. An artist,—I do not know who he was,—who was taking sketches about the country, strayed into the farm in the olive

gathering, and as he was painting an olive-tree, he asked Paolina to stand under it and let him paint her too. This, (with her usual bad habit of saying yes to everything) she agreed to do, her parents of course consenting. The artist did not finish his picture that day, and came back the next. Now Paolina had no idea that she was doing wrong, and never noticed that people saw her from the road; but it was a sad day for her peace and mine. The girls with the plain faces and crimped hair had found what they wanted to say against Paolina, and they all declared that she was a *model*; which is a very bad name indeed for a girl in this country. And then commenced a regular persecution of one of the most harmless creatures in the world. They discovered, on inquiry, that she had sat to another artist, that his wife had lent her a yellow satin dress to sit in, (I could never see what harm there was in that yellow satin dress, excepting that I do not think it can have been becoming to Paolina, but there was a great talk made about it). To be sure, the artist's wife was her mother's former padrona, and she only sat for a favour; but it was enough for their purpose.

Complaints were made to the master of the farm, who immediately forbade her sitting any more for her portrait, even to me. Every sort of malicious and horrid story was invented about her; among the rest she was accused of dressing immodestly, on account of

a bit of pink ribbon which she wore in her hair! Then the priest took it up. He was one of those priests (there are a great many) who take a special interest in the souls of the girls, and appear to think that the boys have no souls of any consequence. I asked a poor woman, one of his parishioners, the reason of this once, and she said she supposed the reason was that boys are all so bad there can be no use in trying to make them good; (c) but I did not find the answer quite satisfactory.

So he took up Paolina as an interesting penitent, and made her leave off the pink ribbon and join the Figlie di Maria, and talked her into the belief that she had been very wicked. She believed it, of course; but she had little idea of what her wickedness consisted in, and she used to go about in those days with a look of mingled penitence and bewilderment, that would have been comical if it had not been so pitiful. I, who saw the injustice of it all, would have comforted her if I could; but my friendship was one of those "pleasures of sin" which she was expected to give up;—just about as sinful, I suppose, as the pink ribbon. She used to come to see me, though, as often as they would

(c) The real reason is that girls are thankful to tell their feelings, and boys hate to; (besides, they seldom have any to tell.) Also, a girl can often go into a convent and not be missed, but a boy has to become the support of his family, and cannot be allowed in freaks of idleness.

let her (and her father and mother took my part; but fathers and mothers can do little when one of those dreadful priests with a vocation for saving the souls of girls comes into a family); but she said little, and always went away with tears in her eyes. And then another priest came in to help, and it was all arranged that Paolina should enter a convent. She did not seem to want to enter a convent, and I was afraid she would be unhappy there, but she had been worried and frightened into that state of mind that she felt as if she would have liked to hide her face anywhere. The priest appeared to expect that she would become a second S. Teresa; (*d*) and the Figlie di Maria, I am sorry to say, became quite as jealous of her as her more worldly companions had been before, and gave it openly as their opinion that their spiritual director was more interested in her good looks than in her soul's welfare. Which was very unbecoming conduct in daughters of the Madonna; I hardly think even the boys could have done any worse. The worst of it was, that the more she was harassed and worried, and the more they took away every beginning of ornament from her dress and hair, the more beautiful she seemed to grow; she looked like

(*d*) Is not this enough reason for his apparent 'dreadfulness'? especially if he thought the chances for her were *either* to be a second St. Teresa, or an artist's model in modern Florence or Paris! Francesca afterwards says, herself, she is too hard on the priest here.

a magnificent *Madonna de' sette dolori*. At last the wished-for day came, when so much beauty was to be, if not extinguished, at least concealed from sight. She went into a convent *on trial*. Her parents were by this time resigned; the matter-of-fact little *Madonnina* laughed at her, and called her *minchiona*, (*e*) and I thought in my heart that the *Madonnina* was right. But Paolina was no fool after all; the only trouble about her was, that she had remained a child too long. But once shut up in her prison (for to her the convent could never have been anything but a prison), all at once she seemed to become aware of what she was doing, and of what others had been doing to her. The confinement was intolerable to her; and after a week of it, when she made her appearance again in her father's house, her first words were: "Mother, give me a spade, and let me go to work; I have had enough of the convent!" Soon after this, a respectable middle-aged *contadino* found himself looking out for a wife: he had always intended, and expressed the intention, never to marry; but his sister-in-law died, and the *padrone* thought they needed another woman on the farm; also his (the *contadino's*) mother was growing old, and wanted a younger woman to help her. So the poor man accepted his destiny, rather unwillingly; and, as he appeared

(*e*) 'Silly thing'—a certain sense of stupidity being mixed up with the idea of irresolution.

to consider one woman about as objectionable as another, he requested a friend, in whom he had confidence, to "find a wife for him." And the friend recommended poor Paolina. The marriage was immediately arranged, and will take place in the autumn. Paolina says she likes the old woman who is to be her mother-in-law, and I hope she may not be very unhappy. In the picture on the seventh page, the man walking behind Paolina is her father: of the woman I know nothing worth telling. Paolina's portrait is given afterwards as the dead girl in the "Soldier's love," page 36; as the girl knitting a stocking on the fiftieth page; in the holy water picture on the fifty-second (this looks more as she did after they began to worry her); in the "Parting for the Maremma," page 60; as the girl sewing, in the picture of the "Two lovers," page 62; as the girl setting a jessamine at her window, page 64 (not like her), and with a lily at page 92. And though I think all these faces are pretty, not one of them gives even a faint idea of her beauty, which I found it entirely beyond my power to represent.

I am very thankful to have two little bits about Paolina in recent letters, with which to close her story.

"Paolina's little brother and sister have just been in to see me, to bring me some wild flowers and tell me about Paolina. She seems happy in her married life, much happier than I expected, and has attached herself warmly to her old mother-in-law, who, having lost her

own daughter, finds much comfort in Paolina's sweet gentle ways. I do not think her husband cares much for her, but he can hardly help loving her in time,—nobody could help it; and she is satisfied with little."

" . . . Dear Paolina came to see me the other day, with her husband, quite happy now, and perfectly radiant in beauty. As she sat opposite to me, in her pearl necklace, with her colour as delicate as an apple blossom, I thought I never saw anything so lovely.

"It was fast-day, and they would have nothing but some bread and coffee. Enrico, a rough, good-natured bear of a contadino, finished his in about a minute, and then watched her, as she put very little mouthfuls into her little mouth, until at last he remarked: '*I could have eaten an ox in that time.*'"

END OF STORY OF PAOLINA.

NOTES ON THE PRIEST'S OFFICE.

THE longer I live in this world, natural and spiritual, the more it puzzles me; but nothing in it at present so much as the attitude of the persons summed now in the popular mind, and in the most expressive language of Europe, as "pretraille." Not that I perceive with any distinctness what their attitude really is, but this very secrecy of it is the wonder to me,—that while the temporal powers are everywhere confiscating their estates, and the general tenor of its so-called 'progressive' thought either ignores their existence, or regards it as a scandal, they suffer this robbery and insult without saying any plain syllable, or doing any brave thing for themselves: their life is as the breathing and circulation of the blood of a person in a swoon; and we who trusted in them, stand like the bystanders by fallen Eutychus, hoping against hope for the miraculous words, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him."

The extreme degradation and exhaustion of their power in the midst of—again I must use the qualifying 'so-called'—civilized 'society' is shown, it seems to me,

conclusively by their absence from the *dramatis personæ* in higher imaginative literature. It is not through courtesy that the clergy never appear upon the stage, but because the playwright thinks that they have no more any real share in human events; and this estimate is still more clearly shown by their nonentity in the stories of powerful novels. Consider what is really told us of the position of the priesthood in modern England, by the fact that in the works of our greatest metropolitan novelist, it appears, as a consecrated body, not at all; and as an active or visible one, only in the figures of Mr. Stiggins and Mr. Chadband! To the fall of the Church in Scotland, the testimony of the greatest of Scotchmen is still more stern, because given with the profoundest knowledge of all classes of Scottish society. In "The Antiquary," how much higher, in all moral and spiritual function, Edie Ochiltree stands than Mr. Blattergowal; in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," how far superior Jeanie is to her husband!

The evidence of foreign romance is more fatal still; because it might have been thought that, merely for the sake of picturesqueness, and as really on the Continent a somewhat glittering phantasm, the priesthood would have sometimes mingled in the effects produced by twilight or candlelight in a modern French novel. I cannot at this moment remember a single scene of a fine story in which it appears, either for good or evil. The amiable poor are unrelieved by it; the virtuous rich

unadvised. Fleur de Marie dies without its consolation, and Monsieur de Camors without its reproof.

And the practical estimate of it formed by the average citizen's mind (shopkeeper or manufacturer) is more singular still. On the 19th of October, 1880, I saw the 'Tartufe' played at Amiens, in the little theatre which abuts in its back yard against a remnant of the king's palace, now decorated by an enormous gas lamp, lettered 'Billard.' (f)

The play was preceded by a lecture on Molière, admirably and pleasantly given by a well-to-do Amiens citizen—presumably one of their leading wool-manufacturers, who had interested himself in matters of taste. He told the audience that in the honours of literature, with the 'Tartufe' alone, the French could challenge the world, "et même Shakspire," whose greatest work, 'Mac-Beth' (he did the 'th' with ease) was greatly inferior to this greatest of Molière's; that all the other characters in Molière had passed away from present life; but the 'Tartufe' was immortal, representing human nature in its entirety, and above all the horrors of religion; on which text he enlarged, with accusations of the existing priesthood, which I will not record, but which the audience heard with an under-murmur of eager satisfaction.

(f) My sketch of this lamp, with a little bit of the ruined palace, is given to the St. George's Guild, and at present lent to Oxford.

The sight of that pit, full of unanimous blasphemy, foaming out its own shame within a few hundred yards of the altar of the cathedral which records the first Christianity of France, was a sign to me of many things.

Foaming out, indeed, its own shame first; but also the shame of its shepherds. I have always said that everything evil in Europe is primarily the fault of her bishops; saying in this, only what St. Gregory said a thousand years ago: see his letter to the Emperor Maurice, quoted by Milman. Whatever poverty there is, begins first in the monk's having broken his own proper vow of poverty; whatever crime there is begins in the priest's having been careless of his own sanctification. But while the faults of the clergy are open to the sight and cavil of all men, their modest and constant virtues, past and present, acting continually like mountain wells, through secret channels, in the kindly ministry of the parish priest, and the secluded prayer of the monk, are also the root of what yet remains vital and happy among European races. And this, among many other unimagined truths, Francesca's book will, in its completeness, perfectly show. I leave the stories of Ida, Lucia, and Paolina, as yet without comment; when the rest are before the reader, I will try to sum their collective witness; meantime, since the terms around which the passions of men have rallied, in the existing conflict between Duty and Liberty, are so many and so

vague, that every title of religious function raises up a host of objectors to the word who have no idea of the *Thing*, the younger reader will find it extremely useful to consider what the words King, Priest, and Monk originally and everlastingly mean.

Kinghood and Priesthood are alike the functions of persons elect to the *government*(*g*) of mixed multitudes of

(*g*) I cannot, of course, in these brief memoranda, enter on theological discussion; their purpose is only to enable the reader to understand what he is reading about; but it is necessary for him to recollect that, according to the theology of the Bible, there are two powers joined in the priest: one mediatorial, that of offering sacrifice for men to God,—standing between the living and the dead; the other judicial, that of judging and punishing offences against God. The two powers are united in their utmost force in the great prophet-priests Samuel and Elijah. But we habitually think of them only in their mediatorial and prophetic, and forget their judgment power. “And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal;” “If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.”

The term used by Homer of Chryses, when first he names him ἀρχήρ, signifies especially this power of invoking death, or life. But no supernatural terror of this kind is connected with the office of the Roman Pontifex Maximus, the priesthood among the Romans being simply one of the functions to which any citizen was eligible, as to that of consul or dictator. The transition of the Roman pontificate into the Christian Papacy will be described, if I am spared to complete it, in the IIIrd part of “Our Fathers have told us,” (Araceli,) of which I will

men; they are both of them consecrated offices, and the persons chosen for them are both anointed (in Greek, Christened) in consecration, and they both require for their proper fulfilment, wisdom, virtue, mature age, (*h*) social affection, and schooled discretion.

On the other hand, Monkhood, stripped of its hood, and seen in what verily “*facit Monachum*,” implies no essential qualification of age, faculty, or virtue. Very young people may be monks or nuns, — very foolish people often are; and very wicked people, repenting, may become exemplary monks, though they can never fit themselves to be priests or kings. The thing essential to a monk is only the desire to worship God, and serve man, in any ways of which, from the time his vow is taken, he may be found capable. This feeling, however, is almost always joined with a desire for rest from the troubles of the world, and an instinct for keeping, though its servant, as far as possible out of its way. (*i*) In this

try to get the second chapter, containing the life of St. Gregory, together with the second chapter of the VIth part, (Valle Crucis,) containing that of St. Benedict, published this year, that they may be read in connection with these Tuscan songs.

(*h*) A king, if well brought up, may be mature for his office at eighteen; a priest, not till he is over forty.

(*i*) Nothing is more curious in the character of the First Gregory than the extreme and naïvely selfish sorrow with which he looks back from the loftiest throne of the world, to the untroubled joy of waiting on the poor in his own monastery of St. Andrew.

wish for seclusion, however, monks subdivide into two kinds,—Brothers, who live in companies under rules they are agreed upon, and Eremites, who are a law unto themselves. Vulgar history continually casts its blundering invective against all alike, while it requires the most intimate knowledge, both of their writings and acts, to judge, with the slightest approach to fairness, of either body.

Further, in the high offices of the Priesthood, magnificence of state is entirely needful. The most beautiful existing symbol of all priesthood is given by Tintoret, in his picture of the Presentation, in the School of St. Roch, at Venice. The entire picture is one glow of crimson and gold, in the midst of which the infant Christ rests in the priest's arms on a sheet of white linen. In daily life the practical power of the Temple, Priest's Robe,(k) and Priest's Choir, is entirely beyond

(k) See the lovely tradition of St. Martin, "Bible of Amiens," chap. i., pp. 26, 27. Of the manner in which the use of splendour is disputed by the typical modern English Protestant, ignorant alike of painting, sculpture, and music, and complacent in the drab of his individual Papacy, I am content to give two examples, from the professedly temperate writings of an entirely well-meaning, and, according to his knowledge, conscientious author.

"Music, and painting, and pantomime, and a tinsel declamation, must do their several parts to disguise the subduction of the essentials of devotion. The laity, having nothing to transact

dispute; but it is curiously illustrated in English and Italian history by the use made of music, metal-work, and painting by the first Gregory in civilizing the Saxons and Lombards. To this day, part of the treasures of his friend the Lombard queen, Theodalinda, may be seen at Monza:—his gifts to Bertha of England, (the great granddaughter of St. Clotilde) founded the library of Canterbury; and their effect remained in the Saxon mind until another French princess, by the pictures in her missal, began the education of Alfred.

But these treasures of the Priest's state, observe, are never his own, any more than Aaron's breastplate or the gold of the Ark was his own. Absolute personal poverty is the law alike for Priest and Monk; and the entire vitality of Church discipline depends on the observation of this law (hence the prophetic earnestness of St. Gregory in punishing the first violation of it); (1)

with God, must be amused and beguiled, 'lest haply the gospel of His grace' should enter the heart, and so the trading intervention of the priest be superseded."

* * * * *

"If it be for a moment forgotten, that in every bell, and bowl, and vest of the Romish service, there is hid a device against the liberty and welfare of mankind, and that its gold and pearls and fine linnen are the deckings of eternal ruin; and if this apparatus of worship be compared with the impurities and cruelties of the old polytheistic rites, great praise may seem due to its contrivers."—(Natural History of Enthusiasm.)

(1) It is interesting to see the view taken of St. Gregory's

but for the most part, the duty of the Monk is in literal and total poverty; that of the Priest only in exemplary simplicity of domestic life. By the great primary Commander of the Faithful, the offices of Priest and King were borne in equal simplicity; and the

conduct in this instance by an English well-beneficed divine:—"Gregory became abbot, and that severe discipline which he had imposed upon himself, he enforced with relentlessness, which hardened into cruelty, upon others." The most singular history of this discipline, *combining ingratitude and cruelty, under the guise of duty*, with a strange confidence in his own power of appeasing the Divine Wrath, and in the influence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is the death of Justus, related by Gregory himself. Thus Dean Milman, very certain that he, for his part, has no power of appeasing Divine wrath,—that the Eucharistic sacrifice is feebly influential at the metropolitan altar of London,—and that his own amiable feelings to his friends could not be altered by any sense of duty. He proceeds:—

"Before he became a monk, Justus had practised physic. During the long illness of Gregory, Justus, now a monk, had attended him day and night, with affectionate care and skill. On his own deathbed, Justus betrayed" (confessed, the Dean means, but does not like the word) "to his brother that he possessed three pieces of gold. This was in direct violation of the law of community of property established in the monastery." (There was no law of 'community of property' in a Benedictine monastery. There was a law against having any property at all. What the Benedictine held, he held for God and the poor, for education, hospitality, and help to all men. His cowl and dish belonged to *him*, no more.) "The

Caliph Omar leaves Medina to receive the surrender of Jerusalem, "mounted on a red camel, which carried, besides his person, a bag of corn, a bag of dates, a wooden dish, and a leathern bottle of water. Wherever he halted, the company without distinction was invited to partake

money was found concealed in some medicine. Justus died unabsolved, and the brethren were forbidden to approach his deathbed. The body was cast out unburied, with the gold, the brethren invoking over it the curse, 'Thy money perish with thee.'"

How extremely cruel to Justus, the Dean thinks. But Justus died not a day the sooner; he was absolved thirty days afterwards; and that *his* money should die with *him*, was perhaps well for more than Justus. We will read farther before we accept the theory of ingratitude and cruelty!

With this exception, however, and one other,—the estimate of monastic vision as "the poetry of those ages,"—Dean Milman's record of St. Gregory is just, and may be consulted with advantage by readers who could not accept the unsifted legend as given by Montalembert. The following sentence, with which the biography of Gregory opens in the sixth chapter of 'Latin Christianity,' is at once the most generous and sagacious I have ever met with in a Protestant writer.

"It is impossible to conceive what had been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the middle ages, without the mediæval Papacy; and of the mediæval Papacy the real father is Gregory the Great. Christianity had converted the Western world—it had by this time transmuted it: in all except the Roman law it was one with it. Even Leo the Great had something of the Roman Dictator. Gregory is the Roman altogether merged in the Christian Bishop."

of his homely fare, and the repast was consecrated by the prayer and exhortation of the Commander of the Faithful.”(*m*) The highest offices of the Christian priesthood have, as a matter of fact, been always best sustained by men who were monks and priests in one; but from the general history of mankind, there is a law deducible which terminates, once understood, the idle disputings about celibacy of ‘clergy,’ (as if the various and infinite orders of men included under that vague word could be legislated for in the same sentence!). The broad testimony of past events is conclusive that the perfect priest should be married, and the perfect monk, unmarried.

The *Iliad* begins with the history of the daughter of Chryses; the pontificate of Joseph is perfected in his

(*m*) Gibbon, chap. li. Compare the foregoing general description of the Caliphates of Abubeker and Omar: “The pride of their simplicity insulted the vain magnificence of the kings of the earth. On the Friday of each week, Abubeker distributed the residue of his own and the public money, first to the most worthy and then to the most indigent, of the Moslems. The remains of his wealth, a coarse garment, and five pieces of gold, were delivered to his successor, who lamented, with a modest sigh, his own inability to equal such an admirable model. Yet the abstinence and humility of Omar were not inferior to the virtues of Abubeker; his food consisted of barley-bread or dates, his drink was water; he preached in a gown that was torn or tattered in twelve places, and a Persian Satrap, who paid his homage to the conqueror, found him asleep among the beggars on the steps of the mosque of Medina.”

marriage with the daughter of Potipherah; and that of Moses begins in his winning the daughter of Jethro. The fall of the Jewish priesthood is virtually summed in the apostacy of the sons of Eli and Samuel; the Christian dispensation is announced by the pure lips of the son of Zacharias.

In the general discipline of the Church, it is necessary, not only that the Priest should be married, but that he should live a happy and serene domestic life; in order that he may be, not the mere rebuker of men,—far less their accuser,—but that he may, in the power of the Holy Spirit, be their Comforter. (*n*)

On the contrary, the Monk's voice is essentially 'in deserts,' so far as he is weak, in flight from the world; so far as he is strong, in warning to it, or testimony against it, under Heaven's inspiration. When monk and priest are alike corrupted, the prophets prophesy falsely, the priests bear rule by their means, and the day is near that brings the end thereof.

With these general data, I leave the reader for a while to his own reflections on the people he will make acquaintance with in Francesca's stories, and on the circumstances which have made them what they are. Respecting the causes of the confusion in modern European Churches, I leave him also to draw such

(*n*) Study the life of the Swiss parish-priest, Gotthelf, in which the only allowed luxury was the gilding of the book for the register of marriages. ('Fors Clavigera,' June, 1873; p. 2.)

conclusions as the foregoing statements of general ecclesiastical law may, to his own mind, suggest or justify; praying him only, in so far as he has been indignant at the faults of the clergy, or provoked by their interference, to weigh with care the mischief arising from the weaknesses of a class of men desirous on the whole of doing good, as compared with that arising from the general folly and fault of mankind. For one girl who has been harmfully influenced by her clergyman, how many by their milliners? for one life which has been extinguished in a monastery, how many on the battle-field? for one heart which has sickened in religious enthusiasm, how many in wanton love?—and for one youth or girl who has been misled by priest or pastor, how many have been crushed by the neglect, infected by the folly, or sacrificed to the ambition of their parents? If, from the false teacher, their blood shall be required,—how much more of those whose iniquity is visited on them to the third and fourth generation?

JOHN RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, 20th July, 1884.

POSTSCRIPT.

READ, for final witness to all I have tried to say in the foregoing notes, the following passage, from a recent letter of Francesca's.

“To-day I saw, for the first time, a man who passes for a saint, and looks as if he might be so; the patriarch of Venice. He was just going to his gondola: a grand-looking man, not so old as I had expected, dressed all in a long red robe. His face was full of goodness; as he reached the steps, all the people in the calle crowded about him to kiss his hand and ask his blessing; priests, well-dressed ladies, men going to their work, ragged little children. Some caught the border of his dress and raised it to their lips; some dropped on their knees; he could hardly liberate himself from them, but was very kind and gentle and patient with them all. It was a pretty sight; they say he leads the life of a hard-working parish priest rather than a bishop, and is loved here beyond all expression.”



Li mostri mi parete un bel fiore,
 Martedì, una voruglia rossa.

Mercoledì un bel giglio bianco
 Giovedì una voruglia rossa.

Venerdì una voruglia rossa
 Sabato una voruglia rossa.

Isabella of l'Abetone.

FLOWER OF THE PEA.

THE two drawings given in this number, though not possessing all the higher qualities which Miss Alexander attains in her rendering of devotional subject, are faultless in their own kind, and exactly expressive of her peculiar skill and feeling. To myself they are of the most singular interest, in rendering precisely what I always saw, and tried to describe in my early writings, of natural beauty and expression, whether in animate or lifeless things. They are exactly what, before Pre-Raphaelitism was heard of, I defined in the chapters on Truth, in 'Modern Painters,' and pleaded with artists to try for; surely knowing then, what I only more thoroughly and intimately know, after forty years of labour, that such art is the needfullest for all present help and teaching of our people;—and the best antidote to the fury and vice, alike of our withering caricature, and sensual imaginings, in what we suppose to be poetical composition.

I am able to speak of these two drawings as faultless, because Francesca's carelessness of light and shade enhances, rather than injures, the clear local colour and serenity of open air in both of them, and because, while there are often slight errors in gesture or position in

her management of groups, the dignity of Isabella's rest, and the firm tenderness of the girl's slight stoop towards her lover, are here given with entirely errorless perception and sympathy.

The little love song which the portrait of Isabella illustrates, better read in Francesca's pretty writing than in print, is to my mind infinitely beautiful, both in its expression of the idea of the Sabbath—the day of Rest in the perfectness of creation; and of the Rest of true love in fulness of sacred joy. But together with it, read those under the Lovers' parting, and then the following little stornelli, rendered into as sweet English by Francesca in this piece of letter just received from her, and then, the following song, 'Non vi Maravigliate,' to excuse all our shortcomings,—Beatrice's, Francesca's, and mine.

"People who are not Tuscans call *rispetti stornelli*; but they are really quite different things. A real Tuscan stornello is a song or verse in three lines, like this pretty Florentine one:—

'Avevo un fiorellin, mi s'è appassito;
Avevo un cuore, e me l'hanno rubato;
Avevo un damo, e questo m'ha tradito!'

which I translate, rather literally than poetically:—

I had a little flower, I saw it fade;
I had a heart, 'twas stolen from my breast:
I had a love, and me he has betrayed.

Often a stornello begins with the name of a flower, like this:—

‘Fior di piselli,
Avesti tanto cuore da lassarmi?
Innamorati siam da bambinelli!’

which I should put into English—

Flower of the pea,
We were but children, and we loved each other.
What heart is thine, if thou canst go from me?

“In singing stornelli, one person sings the verse alone, and then all join in the chorus; then another takes it up and sings another stornello. When we lived in the country near Florence, it used to be very pretty to hear the contadini, in the time of harvest or of the olive gathering, singing and answering each other with stornelli, from tree to tree, or from field to field. There are various stornello tunes, nearly all pretty, but the prettiest is the one with the chorus—

Oh biondina, comè la va ’”

NON VI MARAVIGLIATE.

Non vi maravigliaté, giovinetti,
S'io non sapessi troppo ben cantare,
In casa mia non c'eran maestri,
Nè mica a scuola son ita ad imparare.
Se volete saper dov' era la mia scuola,
Su per i monti, all' acqua,—alla gragnuola
E questo è stato il mio imparare,
Vado per legne, e torno a zappare.

IL COLOMBO.

Colombo che d'argento porti l'ale,
Riluce le tue penne quando voli;
Il tuo bel canto lo vorre' imparare,
Il tuo bel canto e le tue rime belle;—
Il sol va sotto e dà luce alle stelle:
Il tuo bel canto e le tue belle rime;—
Il sol va sotto e dà luce alle cime.

YOU ASK ME FOR A SONG.

You ask me for a song, 'then be content,
With little grace, in all I sing or say ;
And judge me kindly, for I never went
To school, and masters never came our way.
The only school where ever I did go,
Was on the mountain, in the hail and snow.
And this, alas ! was all they made me learn—
To go for wood, and dig when I return.

THE DOVE.

O dove with wings of silver, when you fly,
The feathers shine and glisten in my view :
And oh, how sweet your song is ! Would that I
Could learn it. . . . Teach me, dove, to sing, like you,
Your pleasant notes, and your sweet rhymes of love ;
The sun goes down and lights the stars above.
Your pleasant notes, and your sweet rhymes of love ;
The sun goes down and lights the snows above.

THE STORIES OF ISABELLA AND ARMIDA.

I MUST say a few words about the original of the Samaritan woman, who is one of my Abetone friends, and lives with her old mother at Fonte alla Vaccaja, which is a cold and very bountiful spring, coming out of the hill-side, and flowing, in part, into a trough by the roadside formed of a hollow log. That is the way all along the Abetone road: there is no regular village for several miles, but wherever there is a good large spring, there is a little settlement, just two or three houses.

There are only two at Fonte alla Vaccaja; and in one of them, under some cherry and mountain ash trees, Isabella,—that is her name—lives with her mother, and with her married sister and her sister's family. By the way, her sister is Gigia Zanni, the gipsy. So Isabella must be a half-gipsy herself, though she is of a stronger build than most of them, and perhaps takes more after the Tuscan side of the house. In winter she works, with the other women of the country, in clearing the snow from the government road which goes from Pistoia to Modena, and passes

l'Abetone at its highest point. Sometimes the snow falls so deep, in those high Apennines, as to obliterate every trace of the road; and a row of tall black poles has been planted, so that, in any case, travellers can find their way by these, and not wander away and be lost. After any fall of snow the women come out like snow birds, and for the same reason, to pick up a meal, even though it be a poor one: each one carries a large flat wooden spade, made for the purpose, and they work in companies. When there is a mild winter, and little snow, sometimes the poor women are reduced to great want, having no other means of earning anything; until toward the spring, when the *dormienti* come, a sort of mushroom, which grow under the snow, and can be sold for a good price. I knew a little child (I think about nine years old), one of several children belonging to a poor widow, who would go out on a spring morning all by herself, and gather a great basket of *dormienti*, as many as she could carry (she knew where they grew), and take them to Cutigliano, seven miles off, and sell them for six or seven francs, and take the money all safe to her mother; and she was a delicate-looking little girl, and small of her age.

But to go back to Isabella. She often works in the snow when it is so cold that her hand freezes to the handle of her spade, and she cannot detach it until she goes into the house, and wets it with cold water, and warms it gradually. In summer she sometimes goes barefoot

to cut grass—like Eurydice, only Orpheus is unfortunately wanting; and more frequently still, to gather loads of wood, which she stores up for the long winter. When the fir trees on the government land are cut down, the branches are all cut off, that the trunks may be more easily transported, and these are sent away, mostly to Livorno, where they are sold for masts of ships, or to make beams for houses: and the branches are all left lying on the ground, and those who will, carry them away. The women and children work all summer that they may have a sufficient pile of wood to last all winter; and *such* loads as they carry on their shoulders! Isabella would like to go to service, and in that case would have, no doubt, a much easier life; but she says that she will never leave her poor old mother, who is now at the very extremity of life. Isabella is the youngest of her twelve children, and of the others, some are dead, some married and gone away; one or two have been anything but a comfort. Gigia is with her, and is very kind and good; but she has her hands more than full with her own family. So Isabella gives her whole life to her mother, and when not working for her, spends her time in her company; and I have never seen her at any of the dances, or other entertainments of the country. But there seems to be a blessing on her laborious life, for *she is certainly one of the very happiest people whom I ever knew*, and never seems to feel her lot a hard

one. Her picture comes once again as an illustration to the *rispetto*, "Lunedì mi parete un bel fiore," at page 91; but I think the Samaritana is a little the most like her.

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One other thing I want to tell you, because it is a great pleasure among so many that I owe to your kindness, that my dear Isabella is *not* going to shovel snow this winter. She brought on a heart complaint last winter by overwork and exposure to the cold, but she is not too ill to recover, if she can rest and take moderate care of herself. I wish you could see Isabella—she is so much more beautiful than the picture, which cannot give her bright smile, and white teeth, and the brilliancy of her eyes. I am so glad she is not going to shovel snow again, under one of those government overseers, they are so hard on the poor girls! I know one, who, if a girl goes into the house to warm herself for ever so few minutes, fines her a *quarter* of her day's wages (only sixty centimes in all!) And they have to work from seven in the morning until dark, taking out one hour for their dinner of polenta. I think Isabella would have died, if she had done it this winter, and her life was worth saving.

You may perhaps care to hear something more of the child who used to sell mushrooms at Cutigliano. This little girl was named Armida, and she was the second in a family of five, belonging to a poor widow,

Irene Zanni. Her father was a handsome, strong, rather wild-looking man;—I think, of gipsy descent. Sometimes, at a festa, he would drink more than he should have done, and when, on those occasions, as would sometimes happen, there was a fight between the Tuscan and Lombard part of the company, he, with his great strength and lightness, was something terrible to the rather heavier and more massive Lombard shepherds. At other times he was a great man for work, and seems to have been pleasant and affectionate, at least in his own family. He married (as might have been expected) a woman exactly his opposite; a fair, placid, orderly woman, daughter of the old forest guard, Beppe Ferrari; and left the world at last, poor man, on the day that his youngest child was born into it. He had been ill, was recovering, and went to his work, constrained by the need of his family, before he should have done so, which brought on a relapse. Poor Irene left her bed, and her baby an hour old, to be present when the last sacrament was administered to her dying husband, and a few hours later, he was gone. Irene was very quiet in her grief, showed it principally by growing thin, and went to work steadily and courageously for her little brood.

Of all this sad story we knew nothing until we went back to l'Abetone in the summer, when we found the whole family in the depths of want, and the poor baby with nothing but some bits of rag wrapped about

it (in which condition it looked uncommonly pretty, and seemed perfectly contented). Armida, then just seven, was a pretty, very small child, with fair hair and delicate oval face like her mother, but with her father's bright black eyes. She was very quiet, very light and delicate, I used to think I could have lifted her with one hand; she had a watchful look in those bright eyes, as if nothing ever escaped them; she was gentle and motherly with the babies, and she shared all her mother's burdens from the first, as if they had been two women of the same age. Her elder sister Esther suffered from what is the most common illness in this high fine air—heart complaint. She did what she could to help her mother, but it was little; the principal burden was laid on little Armida. In the summer time she used to pick strawberries for us, and she knew every place, for miles round, where the first berries ripened, or where the last ones lingered.

Now it happened that, in the summer when Armida was eight years old, we stayed at Pian Sinatico, four miles down the road, and Armida never failed to bring us our basket of strawberries every day. No one else could ever pick such strawberries as those, all so large and sweet, and shedding such a perfume all about the house when we took off the fresh young fern leaves with which she used to cover them, to keep flies and dust away from them in the road; and there was never one under-ripe, nor over-ripe, nor any sticks and leaves

among them. We were all fond of little Armida in the family ; and besides, her cousin, Lena Ferrari, was living with us as a servant, that year, and she was never tired of making much of the little creature. Always Lena used to give her her dinner ; but Armida seemed shy about eating before us. She liked a glass of milk, and would sit down by the fire and drink it in very little sips, taking quite a long time about it ; but anything else she would ask leave to take in her hand and eat by the way. So Lena used, after she had taken the strawberries out of the basket, to fill it with bread and meat, and cake and fruit if we had them,—generally the best of everything in the house found its way into Armida's little basket,—and then the child would say, "Thank you," and make a demure little bow, and go away, shutting the door very softly behind her. One day—I shall never forget it—there was a terrible storm, the rain coming down in sheets, and wearing the steep road into gullies, and I had gone to the window to look at the grand sight, when I heard a little tap at the door, and looking, saw on the door step a man's coarse jacket, very wet, apparently standing alone ; but a second look showed me, underneath it, a pair of very diminutive and pretty white feet. The road was deserted, not a man had courage to face that storm ; but Armida and the strawberries had come their four miles ! Lena was at the door before me, much agitated,—Armida, not at all so ! She looked to see if the strawberries had kept

dry under their fern leaves, and finding that the rain had not reached them, seemed quite contented. Lena took off the wet jacket, which she had drawn over her head so as quite to cover her, and seated the dripping child in the chimney corner; then burst into tears, and exclaimed, "May God take care of our fathers!"(a) In those days there used to be an idiot about the roads, a man of horrible appearance, who used to wander over the country, giving a strange sort of cry, something between a moan and a howl, like a wild beast; he only differed from a wild beast in being more malicious. He seemed to have had a certain dull sense of his own fearfulness, and to take an awful kind of pleasure in it; he always liked, more than anything else, to frighten children. One day this unearthly creature met Armida, as she was leaving the village, and said to her, "Some day when I meet you I am going to kill you, and strip off your skin, and hang it upon a pole by the road." The child looked up with her bright eyes into the frightful vacant face, and answered: "No you will not; you will never do me any harm." At this, a woman standing near by, said to her out of simple mischief: "Do not be too sure, he did that very same thing to a little girl the other day!" All this sounds very ridiculous to us, but poor

(a) I don't understand, quite:—does it mean that surely the fathers who leave their children desolate must be made, in the other world, to feel desolate themselves; and that Lena prays for them also?

Armida believed it, and what was she to do, obliged to walk that long solitary road every day? The gain that she made by her strawberries was of great consequence in the family, and as she thought of her heavily-burdened mother, of her helpless sister, and of the three babies at home, she could not refuse to go. Afterwards when we knew all this, and asked her why she was not more afraid to come all that way, alone, she said: "When I passed out of sight of the houses, I used first of all to say 'Our Father,' *and after that I used to sing all the rest of the way*, so as not to be frightened. And when I thought I saw the idiot, at a distance, I turned into the woods, and walked for a long way out of sight of the road." However, after a few days Armida confided the whole story to Lena, who told us; and then, of course, we did not allow her to be frightened any more. We appealed to the priest of Pian Sinatico, who is an excellent man, and a friend of ours, and he said that the idiot really was dangerous, and should not be allowed to wander about the roads alone. He obliged the creature's family to keep him in confinement, threatening to appeal to the law if they did not; and so the roads became safe again, and Armida brought her strawberries to Pian Sinatico all the summer in peace.

On the very last day of our stay there, instead of Armida, Irene came herself, saying that she had come to thank us. I asked her, with some natural curiosity, what she had to thank us for, to which she replied,

“For sending me my dinner every day.” And then we compared notes, and it all came out, that Armida’s preference for eating her dinner in the open air only meant that she wanted to take it to her mother, and foreseeing that her mother might have a natural objection to taking the bread out of her child’s mouth, she told her that we sent it to her, and that she herself had dined at Pian Sinatico; and so she had, poor child, but only on a glass of milk, which she drank because she could not carry it away.

THE STORY OF MARIA AND METILDE SEGGI. (*b*)

I BELIEVE the next face in the book which deserves an account is that of Metilde Seghi—the little widow, we call her—on page 63. As one may see from the picture (which is just like her), she is not beautiful, and yet there are few faces which I like so well to look at. She is naturally dark, and has been burnt by the sun as brown as any Indian, and she is of very diminutive size, though her step is vigorous, and her figure pretty and graceful. But her great charm is in her voice, which is so soft and sweet and full of expression, that I hardly ever heard another like it. But I am beginning this story in the middle; before I tell about Metilde I must tell a little about her family.

Somewhere a long way back, toward the beginning of the century, I do not know in what year, the Seghi family settled in a little hollow on the side of Libro

(*b*) I give this story with Armida's, that Maria, and she, and Lucy Gray, may be remembered together among mountain children: singing each their song, solitary now no more, in heaven.

Aperto, called from its shape, ‘Bicchiere.’ It is a very beautiful place, just a little way above the rocky bed of the Lima, but it is very wild and solitary; and in those days it was an absolute desert. There Metilde’s grandfather built the house where some of his children still live; and planted the inevitable cherry trees about it (cherries are the only trees that will grow at that height; the only fruit trees, I mean), and laid out a fine farm, which still belongs to the family. He had several children, and as they grew up and married, they settled near him, so now there is quite a little colony there. I knew this old patriarch when he was ninety-three, a fine-looking, active man, with a fresh colour, whose principal grievance was that his children objected to his dancing, which was his favourite amusement. He died, almost without any illness, at ninety-seven. Beatrice used to tell me a story about this family, which I will repeat, because it gave me such an idea of the desolate state of the country in those days. This old Seghi had among his children one daughter, Maria, who, though a very pretty girl, never had the use of her reason, and could not be taught to speak intelligibly. But she could sing, and used to sing almost all the time, in a most beautiful voice. Nearly all the Seghi family were either poets or singers,—one meets with such families now and then, in the Apennines. And she was strong, and had learned to work, with the others. Every evening, toward sunset, she used to carry the pitcher to the

spring, some little way off from the house, and bring it back full, for her mother to make the polenta, and she always went and came singing all the way.

Now one year, at the beginning of winter, the family thought it best to move to another house which belonged to them, near Melo, toward Cutigliano, where they would not be quite so much cut off from all the rest of the world. On the afternoon after their arrival in the new house, Maria took her pitcher and went for water as usual. Nobody took any notice of her; the family were busy, and she was a quiet, harmless creature, who had learned to fulfil her few duties without assistance or direction from anyone. But some of them remembered afterwards that they had seen her go, and heard her singing as she walked away from the door. It was the last time: poor Maria's singing was never heard again by anyone in this world. When, some time later, they missed her and began to look for her, she was nowhere to be found, and though they sought for her in great distress—for her parents loved her as parents always love unfortunate children—the search was useless, in those interminable woods. And that night the snow began to fall. When the spring came and the snow first melted, some hunters, going through the woods, found a young girl sleeping under a fir tree, with a copper pitcher by her side. They went up to her, and recognized poor Maria Seghi, dead, no doubt, in that first snow-

storm, but still quite unchanged in appearance, and looking as if she had just dropped asleep.

This is all Beatrice knew, and I repeat it as she told me: of course I could never speak to any of the poor girl's brothers about it. I know other people about Abetone who have those sad stories in their families, but they do not like to talk about them. The first time I ever saw Metilde was on her wedding day, when all the family and relations walked up to l'Abetone in procession (there being no church, or priest, at Biechiere), with Tolini, the violin player from Cutigliano, and his son, playing a lively tune at their head. After the wedding there was a dance, and Domenico Seghi, her father, though an old man, outshone everyone else as a dancer, and went through the most extraordinary performances, spinning about sometimes on one foot and sometimes on the other, sometimes stooping until his knees almost touched the ground, and spinning about in that position. He would dance with no one but his wife, because, he said, he should not like to make her jealous. This occasioned a good deal of laughter, Mamma Seghi being a very retiring, placid little old lady, whom one could hardly imagine in a fit of jealousy. I suppose his real reason for selecting her for a partner was that she could dance about as well as he could, only in a quieter style; her feet moving very rapidly in time to the music, while her erect little figure hardly swayed at all, but seemed to be carried about the room as if on

wheels, and I think she could almost have carried a glass of water on her head without spilling any. I can remember still how, gradually, all became excited in the dance, how the men took off their jackets, and the women untied their handkerchiefs and turned the ends over their heads, and all made serious work of it: and the dancing over, there was some singing, and Pellegrino, Metilde's brother, the first singer in the country, sang some verses of the giostra of Santa Filomena in a very grand voice like an organ, and then little Metilde joined in and sang with him, and then some of the others. At last they all marched off in procession again, with the two violins at their head, and friends firing salutes from the houses along the way. Metilde was in extreme delight and excitement over the music and dancing, and never remembered to "look modest" after the usual fashion of contadina brides, and to keep her eyes fixed on the ground, but walked along gaily beside her tall, good-looking husband, looking like a child being taken to a festa. Poor girl, she was not much more than a child after all, only seventeen then, looking two or three years younger, a sensitive, excitable little creature, — like all the Seghi, and with a very dependent and affectionate nature. Her festa did not last long; everything promised well at first; a kind husband, a beautiful farm close to her father's, and her relations all about her. And they were a very united family. But troubles soon began; four children were

born, one after another, and they all died before they reached the age of two years. Both she and her husband mourned bitterly for their little ones, and could never forget them. Metilde seemed to find some comfort in talking about them, and in shedding many tears; but her husband, Pellegrino—he had the same Christian name as her brother, the singer—seldom spoke of his troubles; instead, he grew thin and quiet, and very compassionate of the troubles of others. He treated his wife, especially, with great gentleness and tenderness, and seemed always to be trying to console her, by his kindness, for the loss of the children. Then a fifth child came, a most beautiful little boy this time; they called him Adamo. When he was a few months old he was taken ill like the others, and they thought he was going to die. We heard of it—we were at l'Abetone at the time—and we sent him a very simple medicine, which, by the blessing of Providence, arriving just at the right minute, saved his life. And this was the beginning of a very strong and lasting attachment, on the part of Metilde and Pellegrino, to us. They used to supply us with milk from their farm, for by that time we had gone to housekeeping: and to bring it they were obliged to descend a steep path from Bicchiere to the Lima, and then cross the noisy, foaming little river on some stepping stones, and then ascend another *very* steep path, among broken rocks and tangled bushes, to the main road. Sometimes, when it had rained much, the

stepping stones were covered, and then Pellegrino—who used to bring the milk whenever the weather was bad, or Metilde was tired—had to go more than a mile up the river, to find another crossing place, and sometimes, when it was very stormy, the river was quite impassable, and so we had no milk at all.

In the year when Adamo was two years old, when the time came for us to go back to Florence, I remember that Pellegrino seemed unusually sorry to part from us. As he parted, he said: "I hope we shall meet in the spring; but if not, I hope we shall meet in Heaven." I can almost see now his sad, kind, pale face, and hear the voice in which he said those words. His quiet grief for his children, his patience, and his gentleness with others, had given him an air of refinement which his rough hands and contadino clothes could in no way lessen, and I often used to address him as "Signore," without knowing it, until his faint smile of amusement would remind me that he was not what is usually called a gentleman, though he appeared to have all the best qualities of one. We never saw him again: the next winter, when the snow was deep, he was taken ill with an attack on the chest, which at first seemed to be slight, so that no one made any account of it. But one night, when there was a terrible snowstorm, he was taken worse, and both he and Metilde saw that the end was at hand. Neither priest nor doctor could be sent for, or could have come, through the snow. Metilde

could not have gone even to her father's house, though that was not far off. Then Pellegrino said to her: "Metilde, I think I could say the prayers for the dying, if you would help me." And the poor little woman, in the half-buried house, had courage given her to kneel by the bed of the man who had been, one might say, husband and father both to her, and to say the prayers, which she knew by heart, he repeating the words after her. Then he spoke a few words of farewell to his wife, saying: "Take good care of Adamo, and keep my watch for him." And finally, as the last moment came, he said, "Lord Jesus, forgive my sins, and teach me the way to come to Thee." And with that he passed away, and Metilde was left alone with the child. All this she told me, as well as she could tell it between her sobs, when we met in the spring. Everybody wondered what the little widow would do, and of course she had plenty of advice, and some thought she had better let the farm and go home to her parents, and others advised a second marriage: but to everyone's surprise, the helpless little creature, as everybody called her, kept on with the farm all by herself, only hiring a little boy to go after the cows, and her father and brothers, of course, lending an occasional helping hand. Adamo is growing into a large boy, and will soon be able to make himself useful, and everybody likes Metilde, and would like to befriend her.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE STORY OF METILDE SEGHIL.

WHILE, as I have already said, I contentedly and reverently leave these sketches of the Italian peasantry to produce their own impression on the reader's mind, unwarpd by comment of mine, I yet think it well to note in passing any chance bearing of them which might else escape his notice. It seems to me that this beautiful last scene of Pellegrino's life, and Metilde's love, should teach us all the value and power of the forms of prayer which are indeed composed so as to express with sufficiency, and follow with true sympathy, the emotions, scarcely to themselves always intelligible, of sincere and simple Christian minds, in the states when they most need, and may be least able, to pray. All that has ever been alleged against *forms* of worship, is justly said only of those which are compiled without sense, and employed without sincerity. The earlier services of the Catholic Church teach men to think, as well as pray; nor did ever a soul in its immediate distress or desolation, find the forms of petition learnt in childhood, lifeless on the lips of age.



Rispetti



Take courage, love, and if it must so be,
 Whence but take no sword in thy heart
 For if I knew it, it would trouble me,
 We think in sadness I had seen thee part.
 Go not out, but go, and soon return again:
 And leave the sighs to me when thou remain.

Stateni allegro, amor: se vi ne andate.
 Non vi pigliate al cor malinconia.
 Se lo sapessi, me lo avrei per male,
 Che andaste mal contento per la via.
 Andate pure e ritornate presto:
 Nasciate sospirare a me che resto.

The Lovers' Parting.

LETTER FROM ANGELO TO ROSINA.

I intended to give in this place, for illustration of the lovers' parting, a real letter, written in verse, by Angelo the son of Beatrice, from his winter's working-place in the Maremma, to Rosina of Melo;—but on reading it carefully, I find it scarcely in harmony with the rest of the poetry in the book, being indeed a letter, not a song, and though gracefully versified, little otherwise different from love-letters written far north of Tuscany. So, instead, I give the chanted letter of an unknown Angelo to an unknown Rosina—one of the few pensive songs in the book, “*Sarai Contenta.*”

QUANTI CE N'È.

Quanti ce n'è che mi sento cantare
Diran: Buon per colei ch' ha il cor contento!
S'io canto, canto per non dir del male;
Canto, per iscialar quel c'ho qua drento:
Canto per iscialar mi' afflitta doglia;
Sebbene io canto, di piangere ho voglia:
Canto per iscialar mi' afflitta pena;
Sebbene io canto, di dolor son piena.

SARAI CONTENTA.

Morirò, morirò, sarai contenta!
Più non la sentirai mi' afflitta voce:
Quattro campane sentirai suonare,
Una piccola campana a bassa voce.
Quando lo sentirai il morto passare,
Fatti di fuora, che quello son io:
Ti prego, bella, viemmi a accompagnare
Fino alla chiesa, per l'amor di Dio!
Quando m'incontri, fallo il pianto amaro;
Ricordati di me, quando t'amavo.
Quando m'incontri, vogli i passi indietro;
Ricordati di me quand'ero teco.

HOW MANY COME.

How many come and listen to my songs,
Then say, 'Tis well he has a heart so gay !
I'd rather sing than talk of all my wrongs,
I sing to let my hidden grief have way.
My heart is full, I cannot silent keep,
But while I sing I'd often rather weep.

THOU WILT BE CONTENT.


I'm dying, dying; thou wilt be content,
For my sad voice will weary thee no more.
'Thou'lt hear instead the bells with their lament,
High in the tower sounding, all the four.
When past thy door the dead is borne away,
Come out and look, for I am he they bear :
This only, dearest, for God's love I pray,
Come with me to the church, then leave me there
Come with me to the church, and shed some tears
Remember I have loved thee many years.

“The English translation of these two beautiful *rispetti*,” says Miss Alexander, “is a little shorter than the original, because I have omitted the repetition of the last lines, which is beautiful and characteristic in the Italian, but in English it is not so easy always to say the same thing in two different ways, and make both sound natural.”

In this case, I should have, perhaps, myself preferred a simple translation in prose. I want to know, for one thing, what Francesca does not explain, whether the “little bell with the low voice” was one of the four, or a fifth, feebler.

As for the saying of the maid to her lover in the ‘Parting,’ one ought to learn Italian merely to read it.




*here on the plain a little
house I see,
And in that house my lady lives herself;
Beside the door a green pomegranate tree,
A jessamine blooming on the window;
Come love and set thy jessamine in the
Sing, I can hear thee at thy window there.
Come love and set thy jessamine in the sun
Sing, I will consider when the song is done.*

*Lia casa del mio amor sta in
bel piano,
Rimpetto alla mia por un giardino
Appoi dell'uscio è un bel melagrano
Alla finestra ci ha un gelumino
Piglia quel gelumino, mettilo al fresco,
Conta poi su che ti rispondo a questa
Piglia quel gelumino, mettilo al sole,
Conta poi se, che ti rispondo amore.*

The Jessamine Window.

THE JESSAMINE WINDOW.

IL GELSUMINO ALLA FINESTRA.

La casa del mio amor sta in un bel piano,
Rimpetta alla mia par un giardino.
Appiè dell' uscio c'è un bel melagrano
Alla finestra ci ha un gelsumino
Piglia quel gelsumin, mettilo al fresco ;
Canta pur su, che ti rispondo a questo.
Piglia quel gelsumin, mettilo al sole ;
Canta pur su, che ti rispondo amore.

THE JESSAMINE WINDOW.

There on the plain a little house I see,
And in that house my lady lives herself;
Beside the door a green pomegranate tree,
A jessamine blooming on the window shelf.
Come, love, and set thy jessamine in the air :
Sing, I can hear thee at thy window there.
Come, love, and set thy jessamine in the sun,
Sing, I will answer when the song is done.

THE STORY OF GIGIA.

Now I come to the Madonna and the Gipsy. Of the Madonna I have already told,—of St. Joseph I know little; he was a contadino, and hired a farm at Bellosguardo for a year or two, then went away. I believe he was a very good man, but he was so extremely deaf that I could not make much acquaintance with him. But I ought to say that the Bambino (in the picture where the Madonna is riding on the donkey) is poor Giulia's child—Giulia, that was my Ida's sister.

About the Gipsy I have much more to say. She is Gigia Zanni, of Fonte alla Vaccaja, near l'Abetone, and she is said to be really of gipsy descent, though she would probably not thank me for saying it. There is a little village about two miles past l'Abetone, called Faidello, said to have been settled in old times by the gipsies, where some of the people have a very peculiar style of beauty, and others an equally peculiar and excessive ugliness. Almost all of them have deep, dreamy-looking black eyes, wavy hair, soft voices, and much grace of movement and manner: they have

a slow, half-singing manner of speaking; they are usually of rather a slight figure, and consumption is much too prevalent among the young people. Now I think of it, the picture on the first page of the preface to the *Roadside Songs* represents the country where Faidello lies; and the road, which I at least can trace out for some way, leads through it, though the village itself is out of sight behind the hill-side. The family of Gigia's mother came, I believe, from Faidello, and she has all the peculiar characteristics of the race. Her husband, Cosimetto, is, like many of the mountain people, a musician without knowing music. He plays very sweetly on the violin, though only by ear, and is generally present at all the weddings, dances, and giostre. If any one asks Gigia how many children she has, she says, eight; if one goes on to ask where they are, she answers, with a wave of her hand upward, "Two are with the Lord Jesus, and one has gone to service; the others are with me." A mountain woman never says that she has *lost* a child, and always counts her dead and her living together. But what I wanted to tell about Gigia was her charity to a poor boy, a great many years ago. It was when we first began to go to l'Abetone, and no other strangers went there then, and it was a wild, primitive place enough. One could hardly even call it a village. A little country church, the priest's house, the small tavern, a great barn built to receive the hay from the

government fields, (for l'Abetone is part of the royal possessions,) and the old custom house, no longer used since Tuscany and Modena ceased to be separate states; all built in a plain massive style, with small square windows cased in heavy, roughly-cut stone, and all built on a slope so steep, that every house was a storey higher on one side than on the other. A little farther down the road, across a bridge, was one more small house, and that was all: no other roof in sight, though we had a wide prospect enough of fir woods, and desolate, though beautiful mountain tops.

In the old custom house lived two or three families, Gigia and her little flock on the ground floor. We ourselves occupied all the available rooms in the tavern excepting one, which was kept for the use of any chance traveller. One summer day a waggon stopped under the shadow of the great barn across the road, and two men lifted out a boy and laid him on the stone pavement. Every one went out to look at him, and a very sad sight he was. He appeared to be about eleven or twelve years old, a handsome boy, but deadly pale, and seemed hardly alive. His father, standing beside him (one knew he was the father by the distress in his face), was nearly as pale as the child: he was a careworn, very poor-looking man. We asked what ailed the poor child. He had been helping his father and some other men to make a road, somewhere in the Modenese country, and a

great piece of rock had fallen on him, as they were working under the side of a steep hill, crushing him fearfully. He seemed little likely to live, but had entreated to be taken to Cirelio, near Pistoja, where his home was, that he might be with his mother; and they were trying to take him there, but he suffered too much with the motion of the waggon, and they had been obliged to stop. We wanted to have him brought into the house and laid on a bed; but the tavern keeper and his wife (though really kind-hearted people) would not consent, because they feared lest he should die on their hands. Then we applied to the two or three neighbours, but every one refused, although of course we offered to pay them. Nobody would have a child in that condition in his house. While we were standing there, wondering what we should do, Gigia came out of her door to see what was going on, and as soon as she saw what the trouble was, she said, without hesitation, and without waiting to be asked, "Bring him into my house." It was more trouble, perhaps, for her, than it would have been for any one else present, for she had a young baby at the time, and her husband was away; and the boy really looked as though he were dying, though, I suppose now, he was only faint with pain. As soon as he was in Gigia's house, and had rested a little, he seemed to feel better, and when somebody had given him a peach, and somebody else a cup of coffee, he

seemed a good deal better. And a few hours later he was feeling so very much better that he wanted to go on again toward his home. A barocciaio who lived opposite had just come home then from his day's work, and when he heard about the poor boy, and of his wish to go home as soon as possible to Cirelio (which is about twenty miles from l'Abetone), he undertook to carry him there without farther delay. So, only waiting long enough to feed his mule and give him a short rest, he harnessed him again into the cart, and made a bed of straw for the poor child to lie on, and helped lift him in, and covered him over with his jacket. Every one in the little settlement had turned out into the road to see the departure; Gigia with tearful eyes, very helpful and very motherly, quite sorry, as it seemed to me, to part from her poor little charge. They passed away, down the road, and were out of sight in a few minutes, the tired barocciaio walking at the head of his tired mule, the boy's father beside the cart: the boy himself looking back at us just once with a smile before we lost sight of him, and then settling down on the straw, and drawing his jacket over his head. We heard afterwards that he recovered. The name of the barocciaio was Francesco Rossini: he died several years ago, and I hope that his kindness to that child was laid to his account on the other side.

THE STORY OF FORTUNATO.

As long ago as I can remember anything at all about l'Abetone, in the days when it was a very primitive place indeed, and a great deal prettier and better, I think, than it is now, there was a certain old woman with a donkey and cart, whose appearance in the little settlement was as much a regular part of Sunday as the ringing of the church bell. Garibaldi was the name of the donkey; and, as the Abetone people always appear to have a conscientious scruple about calling any one by his or her real name, the old woman was generally called Garibaldi too; it was not until long afterwards that I came to know that her name was Assunta. She was a rough, weather-beaten, sunburnt woman, with a strong step and a loud voice; neat, but very coarse in her dress, scrupulously honest, it seemed to me, in her dealings, but not very gentle or patient if people tried to cheat her, with hard features and keen gray eyes, which, however, broke out easily into a smile. She used to sell fruit and garden produce of all sorts, and supplied all the scattered houses along the road for many miles. I never took much notice of her until one day in the early summer, when

I had joined the group that always gathered about her cart. She was busy bargaining, and weighing out potatoes and string-beans for some of the women, when those keen eyes of hers caught sight of a little child in its mother's arms, reaching out its hands towards a basket of very bright-coloured cherries, and the mother snatching it away. Instantly she put a bunch of cherries into the little hands, saying, "'Take them, you pretty little dear!" with such a sudden and unexpected sweetness in her face and voice that I was startled, and felt that I had never known anything about her, and that she was really something a great deal more than just a rough woman with a vegetable cart.

After this I used to begin talking to her sometimes; but she was usually in a hurry, and too busy to spare time for many words. But for several years I used to see her and the donkey, always unchanged; until at last the time came when, for reasons which it would take too long to tell, and which have nothing to do with this story, we ourselves were absent for five or six years from l'Abetone. When we returned it was to find great changes, and none of them, to my mind, for the better; the beautiful remote place gradually becoming known, and growing into a fashionable summer resort; new hotels in process of building; the grand old forest, which gives the district its name of Boscolungo, being slowly cut away, the people poorer and more discouraged. And when Sunday came the old woman and the cart

were missing. I asked for them often, but for a long time could find out nothing about them. I knew that Assunta lived at Cutigliano, seven miles down the road, and, as I may as well say here, one of the prettiest, most unspoiled old towns in the country; on a steep mountain slope overhanging the Lima, with its church, said to have been built by the Countess Matilda (but then every very old country church in 'Tuscany, not otherwise accounted for, is attributed to that very pious and war-like lady), and the group of immense and ancient fir-trees beside it, catching the eye for a long way up and down the road. Cutigliano used to be a *Capo-luogo* in old Republican times, and has a grand *Palazzo del Commune*, with inscriptions and coats of arms built into the walls, recalling the various *Podestà* who once bore rule there; and the people still show with pride one inscription that was placed there by poor Ferruccio only a little while before he lost his life at Cavinana, not far away.

However, I am not writing a history of Cutigliano, but of Assunta, who lived in one of its steep narrow streets, just flights of low steps, but with beautiful gardens between the old houses, and roses and jessamines hanging over their walls. At last a friend of Piansinatico, only three miles from Cutigliano, undertook to find her for me; and one day the poor woman, hearing that I had been asking for her, made her appearance at our door. She was so changed that for a moment I did not know

her; her tall figure bent and wasted, her face pale, thin, and sunken, her dress in rags, her hair quite gray. She was not inclined to complain; Assunta always seemed to me like one who had received little kindness in the world, and expected less, and the last thing she looked for was sympathy. But it did not require any explanation, not even two looks to see what the immediate matter was with her, and Lena set a good meal on the table before her without waiting for a word from either of us. When she had eaten, which she did like one half-starved, as I am afraid she was, she told me in few words, and in answer to my questions, her story. There was a great deal more that she did not tell me then, and which I will tell in its place; for I am telling this story unconnectedly, a little at a time, just as, in the course of years, it became known to me.

But what I then learned from her was, that in the past winter, which had been a very severe one, she had been ill, so ill that she had never expected to recover, with no one to take care of her; and when at last her great natural strength conquered and she became able to leave her room, it was only to find her poor donkey dead. What seemed most to weigh upon her mind was the thought that her donkey had been neglected, perhaps starved, in the time when she was too feeble to attend to him. With her donkey her means of earning a support had gone; she could hardly,

at her age, learn a new trade, she never seems to have thought of begging, and she had fallen into the lowest depths of want. However, it is always darkest before daylight, and as Assunta's sad story became known, some of the summer visitors at l'Abetone became interested in her; and one of them concluded to buy her a new donkey, and start her in business once again. Assunta was consulted on the subject, and was finally told to take her time, and select an animal to suit herself. There were two candidates offered: one, a very pretty, gentle, black donkey, in good condition, which everybody strongly recommended her to take; the other a gray one, ugly and vicious, and not much better than a skeleton, scarred and bruised, with his ribs standing out conspicuously. But Assunta, after a few days' trial, chose the ugly one, and having once made up her mind, stuck to it. She chose him, as she told me in confidence, because she wanted to take him away from his owner, who starved and beat him, and she was sure that, if he were kindly treated, he would be a very fine animal indeed. It was a great day when Assunta came to l'Abetone to take possession of the poor creature. Another friend had given her a new dress, and all the neighbours were much interested and excited on her account. I remember still how Peppa Lorenzini, the mistress of the house where we ourselves live, not being quite satisfied with the old woman's appearance, took off the handkerchief which she herself wore, and tied

it carefully on Assunta's head, smoothing gently the gray hair underneath it. And so she was once again set upon her feet, and, before long, the wild haggard look passed away from her face, and though she never grew so stout and strong as she had been before, she was a pretty, happy-looking old woman. She no longer came up with her vegetable cart every Sunday, though she still occasionally did so. She had meant at first to take up her old manner of life, that is, to go once a week to Pistoia, lay in a supply of fruit and vegetables, and then retail them through the country. But she found, on going to Pistoia, that garden produce, like everything else, had increased much in price. And worse than this, a woman who, in old times, had allowed her for friendship to sleep in her house, and put her donkey in the stable, was dead. So Assunta had to pay for a lodging, which ate up a great deal too much of her small profits. She found at last that the most profitable thing for her to do was to go out working by the day, with the donkey, carrying loads of stone or sand for builders, or hay or wood for those who wanted it. In this way she contrived to earn a living. Whenever she came to l'Abetone on any business, as often happened, she had a standing invitation to eat at our house; but she never would eat until she had unharnessed the donkey and fed him, and found a comfortable place for him to wait in the shade.

And now it is time, before I go any farther with my

story, that I should tell a little more about the donkey. His name was Fortunato. Assunta had consulted me about his name, and I had proposed calling him Garibaldi, in memory of the old one. But Assunta had thought best not. "I had trouble once," she said, "about the old donkey's name; the guards arrested me, because they said it was not decent for me to be calling out Garibaldi all over the country after a donkey. They had me up before the tribunal; but I told them the truth about it, that Garibaldi was his name before I had him, and that he would not answer to any other; and they just laughed and let me go." I am sorry to say that Assunta's care and kindness did not work so thorough a reform in the character of Fortunato as she had anticipated. His personal appearance certainly changed a good deal for the better, the scars and bruises healed over, and the ribs became less conspicuous. But his temper had been thoroughly embittered, and he would sometimes bite savagely. Once he bit her; but she bore it with great good humour, saying to me, with a smile, that donkeys that were good for anything always did bite. Indeed, she soon became so fond of her poor companion, that any allusion to his faults appeared to hurt her feelings, as if he had been a dear friend, and she was always ready with some excuse for him. And, to do him justice, Fortunato certainly had his good qualities. Like many ill-tempered people, he was capable of strong affection, and finally attached himself profoundly to his mistress.

She told me once how, when we were leaving l'Abetone, she came down from Cutigliano and waited by the roadside to take leave of us as we passed; but we were looking out for Polissena, who lived on the opposite side of the road, and did not see Assunta; and when she made a sign to the driver to stop, he, thinking probably that she was a beggar, took no notice of her, but drove on. The poor woman was so distressed at this that she cried all day, and Fortunato was so affected at the sight of her distress, that he all day would eat nothing. He was very willing to work, and became, under her care, quite strong and active. She said to me once that he went up hills *like a swallow*; then, apparently not satisfied with this comparison, she said, looking in my face, "Did you ever see lightning?" I replied that I had done so. "Well, then," said Assunta, "*that* is what he goes like!" One sharp winter's day in Florence who should make her appearance at my door but Assunta! I forget now what particular affair of buying or selling had brought her to within a few miles of the city, and she had thought well to spare an hour or two to make us a little visit. So we made her welcome, and when she had eaten and was rested, as she sat opposite to the fire and talked with us, she told us, little by little, much of the history of her life. And it was a strange one! I remember so well that day, though it is far away now. Paolina was with me that day, and the little Madonnina; and I shall never forget the look of wondering pity in Paolina's

beautiful eyes, and the trembling of her lips, and how her colour went and came as she listened; while the dark-eyed, golden-haired Madonnina, though deeply interested, kept herself quite composed, and could hardly help smiling sometimes at some of the old woman's odd expressions; and Edwige, sitting by with her knitting, was kind and sympathizing, but not wondering, for, to her, suffering and want, and help sent in the last extremity, were not things to wonder at; she had proved them all! Assunta could only just remember her mother, and the principal thing that she could remember about her was of having seen her shed many tears. Her father was, as she made no scruple of saying, a bad man; he used to beat both her mother and herself, and she thought that her mother's early death was owing to his ill-treatment. Her next recollection was of a step-mother—a hard, violent woman, who used to abuse her, even more than her father had ever done. So at fourteen, finding herself quite miserable in her own family, she left home and went to service. She secured a place at Pistoia as attendant to a young invalid girl, confined for life to her bed with a hopeless spinal complaint. This period of service (and it was a long one) was the happiest time in Assunta's hard life, and she seemed to look back on the quiet chamber where she for many years waited on her gentle, helpless lady, as on an earthly Paradise. She was, if I remember rightly, thirty when her dear mistress died, leaving her almost broken-hearted. "I could not bear then," she said, "to put another

mistress in my lady's place, and so I went back to my father's house at Cutigliano. My step-mother was dead, and my father had married a third wife, a young woman, younger than myself. Poor Cele (her name was Celestine, but we always called her Cele), she was not very happy ! My father was not good to her, and she was often in tears as my own mother had been. But she and I always loved each other ; and when she died, which was before very long, she made me promise that I would be good to her two little children. So when my father died, soon afterwards, I would not go to service again, that I might not leave the children ; but I bought a donkey and cart, and went selling vegetables about the country. I was young and strong then, and might have been laying up something for old age, but it took all my earnings to support my little brother and sister. I was resolved to give them the best education I could, for nobody had ever taken the trouble to give me any instruction, and I had felt the want of it sadly. So I sent them to school, and they learned to read and write and cast up accounts, and when they grew up they both had fortune. My sister married a *fattore*, and she keeps all his accounts, and they are quite prosperous people ; and my brother oversees some of the people who load wood, and makes a good deal of money." When Assunta came to this part of her story, I asked her how it was that her sister and brother had allowed her to become so poor. She answered sadly, but resignedly : "After they

grew up they never took much notice of me. I went to see my sister, the one who married the *fattore*, and she received me kindly and gave me to eat; but I did not suppose that her husband would want me to keep coming. I never blamed my sister if she did not help me; I always thought she would have done so if she could; but a married woman must do what her husband pleases; but I did feel it hard that my brother should desert me so entirely. But when things looked the darkest for me, something very wonderful happened to me. It was after my donkey died, and I had been selling, little by little, everything that I had, just to live. But I could not pay my rent, and one day the woman of whom I hired my room, told me that she could not wait any longer, and I must go. Then my heart failed indeed, as I thought of being turned into the street in my old age! That night I could not go to bed, I was too unhappy; I sat down on a chair by the bedside, like this,"—and Assunta buried her face in her hands—"and I must have been sitting so for a long time; I do not know whether I was asleep or awake—when all at once I heard somebody say, 'Assunta!' And I looked up, and there, close by me, stood my young step-mother, Cele. 'Oh, Cele!' I said, 'tell me about yourself!—tell me if you are happy!' And she answered, 'I am happy and well, but tell me how *you* are, poor woman.' And I dropped my head on my bosom, and answered, 'Male, male!' Then Cele said,

‘I know all about it, and what you have done for my children, and it has been a great sorrow to me that they have so forgotten you. But if they have forgotten your kindness, I never have. I have been praying so much for you! And at last, to-night, I have been sent to tell you that the worst of your trouble is over: in a little while now help will be sent to you!’ And with those words she left me. But will you believe it? Only the next day I received a present of the most beautiful donkey that ever I saw!” Here Assunta branched out into a long, eloquent, and rather poetical description of the beauty and virtues of Fortunato, and finally ended by saying, “There have been evenings when I have gone to bed without my supper, but *he* never has.”

I have not much more to tell about Assunta: for two or three years she used to appear now and then, as in the old times, at l’Abetone. One day I particularly remember, when she came on foot, in a great hurry, bringing a magnificent stalk of white Annunciation lilies. She had been working at Melo, about seven miles away, on the other side of the Lima, and having seen this lily growing in a garden, had asked for it, and thought, as she said, that she “would just run over and bring it to us.”

The next spring after that, when we returned to l’Abetone, Assunta came no more. I asked for her; she was gone—gone to her young mistress, and Cele,

I hope, where her affectionate heart will have something better to love than a donkey. I have often asked, but have never been able to find out, what became of Fortunato.

No,—nor of the wild ass-colt, who is born, like to man;—nor of the wild bird, that is in heaven, and knows it not;—nor of all the souls capable of love, that never have loved;—nor of the loving souls that have been, and are not. Assunta's dream, if it should be called a dream, is one of the very few instances found in these peasant biographies of any vision seeming to bring intelligence from the other world, or even clue to any far away event in this; the Italian mountaineer seeming to be destitute of any faculty corresponding to the Scottish second-sight. But Francesca tells me that they give great heed to the character and intimation of natural dreams; and I have myself good reason to think them wise in doing so, with their ancestors.

J. R.

LA MADONNA E LA ZINGARELLA.

Zingarella.

Dio ti salvi, bella Signora,
E ti dia buona ventura!
Benvenuto vecchierello
Con questo Bambino bello!

Madonna.

Ben trovata, sorella mia!
La sua grazia Dio ti dia,
Ti i tuoi peccati
L'infinita sua bontade!

Zingarella.

Siete stanchi, e meschini
Credo, poveri pellegrini,
Che cercate d'alloggiare
Vuoi, Signora, scavalcàre.

However, while all this was going on, Beppe drew his number in the conscription, and it was a bad number. He and Faustina, with the hopefulness common to very young people, had always felt as if this could not be; it seemed too terrible to be possible! Then they hoped that they would escape when he came to pass the medical examination; but there was no chance. Beppe was strong and healthy, as well as handsome, and so he had to go. Oh, how thankful poor mothers and fathers are sometimes to think that their sons are lame, or blind of an eye, or have any defect or infirmity which may incapacitate them for military service! I think they are more thankful, sometimes, than people are for having healthy children in countries where there is no conscription. Faustina *would* see Beppe before he went away: no one could prevent her; and they promised to write to each other, and to wait for each other, until his time of service should be over. They did not think, then, that the waiting would be life-long.

It was the summer after Beppe went away that I first came to know Faustina. I was painting a picture then, away from the house where we were staying (we had gone to pass the summer months at S. Marcello), and I wanted some one to go with me, that I might not be quite alone; and I had taken a fancy to Faustina's sweet voice and lively fanciful way of talking, and so engaged her as a temporary attendant. She looked

pale and poorly, for she had been very ill after Beppe went away; but he wrote her kind comforting letters, and she was beginning to take courage again. So she and I used to have quite gay times, singing and telling stories.

I cannot tell which of us knew the most stories; I can only say that neither she nor I ever came to an end, all the time we were together. But my conscience was rather troubled, finding that she believed all my stories, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, etc., as if they were gospel. One day when I told her a story, I think out of the Bible, I said to her, "*This* one is true;" and she answered, "I rather think they are *all* true." I tried to persuade her that some of the fairy stories were, to say the least, improbable; at which she said, doubtingly, "I suppose when they *print* the stories they put in some little things that are not true: that is probably what is meant by *liberty of the press!*"

In those days she told me all about Beppe, and showed me his likeness, which she kept between the pages of an old 'Gerusalemme Liberata,' that she used to bring and read to me sometimes while I worked. Only she used to leave out all the passages that described battles, because she said she was afraid that Beppe might have to go into a battle some day or other, and she did not like to think about it.

And now I have to tell about what happened

to Beppe Fini in the army. He entered it a strong, healthy, high-spirited young man: I know what he looked like then, for the next winter his regiment came to Florence, and Faustina wrote to him to come and see us, and he came. His face had already begun to look sorrowful, and he pined for his home and Faustina; but he still retained his healthy colour, and the clear eyes, and brilliant white teeth, and light step, that he brought away from the mountains.

His superior officers were all very kind to him, and he was a great favourite with them, and with his companions; so this is no story of *cruelty* that I have to tell, but only a common, very common story of events which in the army seem to be inevitable. He came from a cool high place in the Apennines: before long his regiment was sent into a low part of Calabria, where the climate is, for the mountain people of Tuscany, very dangerous. Of course there are plenty of Calabrian soldiers, and the climate is not unhealthy for them; but *they* are all sent somewhere else, very likely to pass the winter at Milan or Turin, where the cold is as dangerous for them as the heat and heavy air of their country is for others. The one thing that seems to be considered needful, in the Italian army, is to remove the soldiers as far as possible from their own homes. Then, Beppe had been used to living in great part on bread or polenta made of chestnuts (for S. Marcello is in the beautiful chestnut country), and all his living

had been of the plainest and lightest. When he was in the army they gave him food which perhaps was better, but for him it was unwholesome—meat and soup cooked with lard, etc. He had been used to drinking some of the best water in the world, from the clear cold springs of S. Marcello; and in the low marshy place where he was sent the water was so bad that he could hardly drink it. He resisted all this for a while, for he was strong; but at last his health gave way. He became ill, and they sent him to the hospital; where he lingered for a long time, sometimes better and sometimes worse. Finally, seeing that he did not recover, they sent him back to San Marcello.

When he arrived there, Faustina, who had been looking forward with delight to seeing him once again, was much shocked at his changed appearance, and wrote to me in great trouble. She was in trouble then in more ways than one: her father had died, leaving his family not well off; and the old aunt with whom she lived had become infirm, so that there were ways enough for Faustina's small earnings to go, and she could not do for Beppe what she would have liked to do. Still, with all her burdens, she spared a little time, and a little money too, for him: at least there was no one then who had any authority to keep her away from him. After some months of slow recovery, he seemed to be nearly himself again; and I suppose, if he could have stayed at S. Marcello then, that his

life might have been saved. But as soon as he began to be pretty well again, he had to go back to the army. And there he broke down again, and went to the hospital again; and when, after another long time of waiting, he was sent back to S. Marcello for good, the chance of saving him was gone. He did not die all at once. I think it was nearly a year that he lingered along, suffering much in mind and body, feeling himself a burden on his relations, distressed and ashamed at having to accept charity from strangers, still more distressed at the thought of leaving Faustina alone and unprotected in the world. She continued to hope against hope almost until the last minute, and she induced him to come to Florence for medical advice, and wrote a letter recommending him to me; but there was little that I could do for him.

The doctors were kind to him: everybody was always kind to Beppe Fini, because nobody could help liking him; and, besides, they said that his complaint was something very singular and interesting, and they wrote accounts of it to medical journals. But they could do nothing for him, and after a while he thought that he would rather go home to die. He had not even a bed left to die in, for this story, which I have told in so few words, is a story, not of months but of years; and during the time that he had been in the army, his sister-in-law and her family had used up and worn out all the little supply of homespun linen that his

poor mother had left him. It did not make much difference; he would have been obliged to go to the hospital just the same in any case, only I think he would have liked to leave Faustina that linen, which they thought once would have served for the house that they meant to have together. He did leave her a few trifles, which he had saved because they were not worth enough to sell. I wrote to her to know if I could do anything more for poor Beppe, and she showed him my letter. He said, "Ask her to write me a letter that will give me courage to die." I do not know what I wrote to him, but I am afraid I did not feel very courageous myself. Faustina has the letter now; she has kept everything that belonged to him. Before he died, he tried to persuade her to marry her old admirer, of whom I have spoken before, and who had always continued faithful to her, and is so now, I believe. But she could not make up her mind to do it, not even to content Beppe, who wanted to think that some one would be kind to her and take care of her after he was gone.

And so he died, worn out at last and glad to go, in the hospital of San Marcello; and so ended their seven years' engagement. Faustina is living at Piansinatico now; her step-mother (who is pretty, and about her own age) is married again, and she has gone to keep house for her brothers. She has grown old before her time, and has never cared much again for

anything in the world ; still she is too busy and too unselfish to be very unhappy. She is always taking care of somebody's neglected children, or helping to nurse some sick neighbour ; she still sings very sweetly, and when she is with others she retains so much of her old lively and rather comical ways, that few, if any, ever imagine what a sorrow she carries about, and always will carry about with her. Once a year, in the summer time, she puts on the black woollen dress that is her best, and her white silk handkerchief, and walks up to l'Abetone to see me, and as soon as she and I are alone together, her first words are : " You remember poor Beppe ? " It seems in a certain way to comfort her to know that there is another who remembers him kindly besides herself. But when I see the white threads in her black hair, and the lines across her forehead, and think what put them there, and how young she is ; and then think of Beppe in his undistinguished grave in the Campo santo at S. Marcello, and how needless, and, as far as we can see, useless, it has all been,—well, I hope I do not feel any way that a Christian ought not to feel, but I am not quite so sure about it as I should like to be.

And so now I have finished all the stories of these hard and obscure lives, which most people care so little to hear about. There are a few other faces in the 'Roadside Songs,' about which I have told nothing; but the reason was, because I had nothing to tell that could interest any one. Often I have asked people to sit for their portraits of whom I knew nothing, just because I liked their faces. I do not know what is to be done with these few stories that I have written.* I wish that I could think they might induce any one who may happen to see them to feel kindly towards my poor friends and others who are like them; and that is the most that I desire for them.

* The Story of Faustina originally closed the series of tales written by Miss Alexander in illustration of her drawings. I have placed it here that the two bereavements of Love by War might be together thought upon. The drawing of the Fountain at S. Marcello was too delicate to admit of being rendered by photography; for the present it is at Brantwood, but I intend presenting it to Girton College, Cambridge. Of the song, which here follows on her story,—it is written under the drawing,—Francesca says: "This little song, which I have put here only for its pretty tune, was taught me by Faustina Petrucci of S. Marcello, the sweetest of all the mountain singers. The picture at the top of the page represents the fountain in the piazza at S. Marcello, as I saw it from the window where Faustina used to sit and sing to me.

TRA LE ROSE.

Ed io son nata tra le rose,
Tra le rose io voglio morir,
Tra le rose io voglio morir, sulla riva del mar!

Babbo non vuole
La Mamma nemmeno!
Come faremo
Per far all' amor?
Ed io son nata, &c.

Babbo non vuole,
La Mamma neanche!
Ho pianto tanto,
Il Cielo lo sa!
Ed io son nata, &c.

THE SONG OF ROSES.

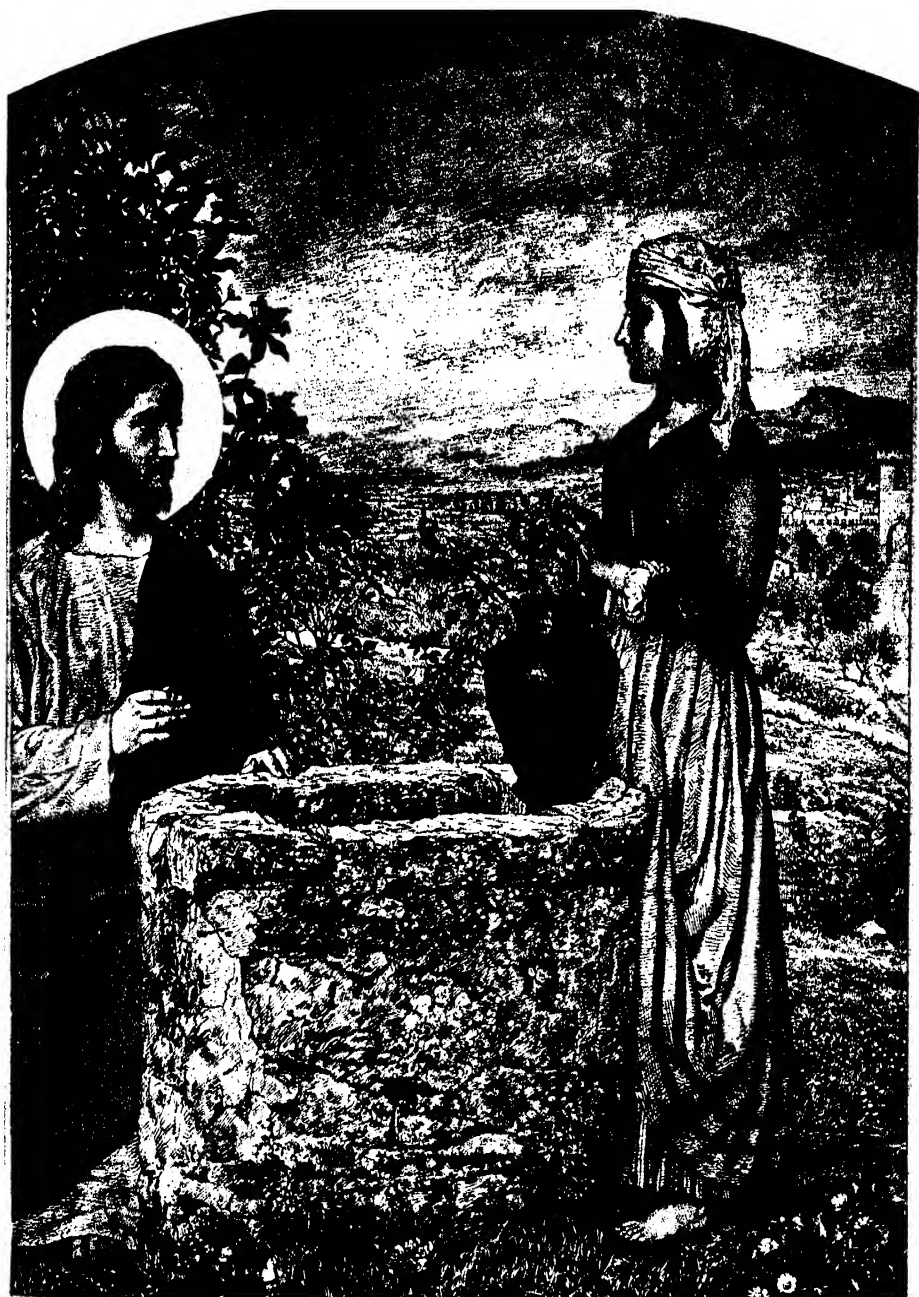
I WAS born when roses were blooming,
And now 'mid the roses I'll die.
And now 'mid the roses I'll die, on the shore of the sea!

Father forbids it,
And so does my mother!
We love each other
But what can we do?
I was born when roses, etc.

Father and mother
Will soon be left lonely.
Heaven knows only
The tears I have shed!
I was born when roses, etc.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE ON HER DRAWING OF
OUR LORD AND THE SAMARITAN
WOMAN.

NEXT (as I have nothing to say about the hermit, whom I did not know, and only took for his venerable appearance), I come to the picture of the Samaritan woman at the well. The face of our Lord, I need hardly say, was drawn without a model, (for where could one find a model for Divinity?) and my own imagination was so altogether indistinct and poor, and yet so much better than my hand could follow, that I passed four days of great distress and anxiety, and became almost ill, trying always and failing always. At last this face was the best I could do, and I was anything but contented; but it brought me a great comfort afterwards, and that is why I speak of it here. After the two figures were both finished, or nearly so, I went out on to a farm where there was a little old well (for there was not room in the picture for a large one), and sat down to draw it. It was a beautiful early spring day, and the path where we sat, Edwige and I, was as white with daisies in some places as if it had been snowing. Pretty soon some of the contadini came up, and asked,



CHRIST
and the Woman of Samaria.

in a very polite manner, to see what I was doing. One of them was a very sweet-looking middle-aged woman, with wavy black hair, and a pleasant smile in her dark eyes; and she could not see anything but that one face. They tried to call her attention to one part or another of the picture, but she stood with her eyes fixed on that face, as if she were trying to learn it by heart.

Then some of the others began to say how beautiful it was, and I said: "Only think what the *real* face will be, when we see it in Heaven!" Then she spoke, in a low solemn voice: "I hope we shall all go to Heaven. I do not know whether I shall ever go there, but I hope I shall: it would be very hard to be driven away from the sight of a beautiful face like that." I cannot say how much I was consoled, and yet overpowered by those words. To think that anything done by my hands should have been used to make the woman desire that Presence more than she did before! I was repaid, even though the work had cost me as many years as it had days. And a few days afterwards, when a young countess, belonging to one of the families most celebrated in Florentine history, was looking over the book (a very pretty young lady she was, and as sweet-looking as the *contadina*—she could not be more so), it seemed to impress her in the same way, and she said: "How I wish I could have that face in my room, to look at when I pray!"

EDITOR'S NOTE ON IDEALISM.

I am under especial duty to place the above note before the reader, though perhaps not wholly with Miss Alexander's permission, because I have spoken in my own writings with too little belief in ideal conception, and too frequent insistence on the necessity of portraiture. The question is virtually set at rest by these drawings of Francesca's, in which the power of executing her conception has been gained by the exactest portraiture, above which, nevertheless, the idealized countenances always rise, not only in beauty, but even reality. The hermit first spoken of is the one with St. Christopher in the eighteenth drawing of our series.

EDITOR'S PREFACE TO THE SONG OF THE SHEPHERDS.

I find as I proceed with this work that the longer ballads do not represent the character of the peasantry with the clearness of the shorter poems, which are the real expressions of their own hearts: and I have therefore substituted some of them, not originally included in my plan, for the longer historical poems of the Samaritan and St. Christopher. The following song of the Shepherds well begins for us the expressions, by picture and verse, of nobly gladdened faith in the birth and presence of the Child Jesus, which I have reserved for the close of this volume.

IL CANTO DE' PASTORI.

NELL' apparir del sempiterno sole,
Ch' a mezza notte più riluce intorno,
Che l'altro non faria di mezzo giorno.

Cantàro gloria gli Angeli nel Cielo,
E meritato udir sì dolci accenti,
Pastori che guardavano gli armenti.

Onde là verso l'umil Bettelemme,
Preser la via, dicendo: andiamo un tratto,
E sì vedrem questo mirabil fatto.

Quivi trovàro in vil panni involto,
Il Fanciul, con Guiseppe e con Maria,
O benedetta e nobil compagnia!

THE SONG OF THE SHEPHERDS.*

AT the first rising of the eternal Sun,
Which shone at midnight with a brighter ray,
Than ever shone the other at mid-day.

The angels sang God's glory in the sky :
Some shepherds, watching by their flocks were found,
Worthy to hear that sweet and heavenly sound.

Then unto Bethlehem, poor and humble town,
Hastened the shepherds, eager to behold
That wondrous sight of which the angels told.

In linen wrapped the Holy Infant lies ;
Mary and Joseph, kneeling, Him adore :
Such noble company ne'er met before.

Giunt' i pastori all' umile presepe,
Di stupor pieni e d'alta maraviglia,
L'un verso l'altro fissaron le ciglia.

Poi cominciaron vicendevolmente,
Con boscherecce e semplici parole,
Lieti a cantar finchè nascesse il sole.

Primo Pastore.

Io, caro amico, alla capanna mia,
Vorrei condurlo, ch' è lontano poco,
Dove nè cibo mancherà nè fuoco.

Secondo Pastore.

Ed io per certo alla città reale
Con frettolosi passi porterollo,
Stretto alle braccia ed attaccato al collo.

Primo.

Le piccole sue man mi porrò in seno ;
E coi sospiri miei le membra sue,
Scalderò piu che l'asinello e'l bue.

About that lowly bed the shepherds stand,
Silent at first with awe and great surprise,
And gaze astonished in each other's eyes.

Till, joy to awe succeeding, they began,
With rustic melody and simple rhyme,
To sing alternate till the morning time.

First Shepherd.

My cottage would be better than this shed,
And 'tis not far; Him thither will I bear,
For neither food nor fire is wanting there.

Second Shepherd.

The royal city were a fitter place :
I'll take Him there, my cloak shall Him enfold :
Close to my heart, He will not feel the cold.

First.

His little hands should in my bosom hide :
My sighs, I think, at least might warm Him more,
Than breath of ox or ass had done before.

Secondo.

Ed io vuo' pianger sì dirottamente,
Ch' empia di calde lagrime un catino,
Dove si bagri il tenero Bambino.

Primo.

Io vuo' tor meco un poco di quel fieno,
Ch' egli ha d'intorno, e non avro paura,
D'orso, o di lupo, o d'altra ria ventura.

Secondo.

Ed io del latte, onde ha la faccia aspersa,
Prender vorrei, se non ch' io ne pavento,
E conservarlo in un vassel d'argento.

Primo.

Io vuo' pregarlo con pietosa voce ;
Signor, perdona li peccati miei !
Che perciò credo che venuto sei.

Secondo.

Ed io vuo' dirgli baldanzosamente ;
Facciamo a cambio, Tu mi dona il Cielo,
Ed io ti presto questo piccol velo.

Second.

I, if I might, would bathe Him in hot tears,
Which from my eyes do plenteously flow,
As I behold Him lying there so low !

First.

Oh let me take a little of the hay
On which He lies, and wear it for a charm :
No bear or wolf would ever do me harm.

Second.

That drop of milk that lingers on His lip
I'd reverently gather, did I dare,
And sealed in silver casket would it wear.

First.

I would kneel down and piteously say,
O Lord have mercy and my sins forgive !
For that is what He came for, I believe.

Second.

I would speak boldly, let us now exchange :
Lord, I do give this little veil to Thee,
And Thou wilt Heaven one day give to me.

Primo.

Io non vuo' chieder, nè Città, nè Regni;
Ma solo dirgli, con un dolce riso,
Sia ben venuto il Re del Paradiso!

Secondo.

Ed io vuò' gir per l'universo mondo,
Fino nell' Indie, gridando sempre mai;
Dio s'è fatt' uomo, e tu meschin nol sai.

First.

I will ask nothing ; let me be the first
To say, although with voice of little worth,
O King of Heaven, welcome to our earth !

Second.

And I would travel all the wide world o'er,
From here to India, telling as I go
How God has come to dwell with man below.

NOTE TO PAGE 246.

* The Shepherds' serenade is taken from the 'Corona di Sacre Canzoni,' but is more fanciful and full of conceits than are the rest of those simple old Hymns. With all its oddity it appears to me singularly devout, tender and beautiful. The last four verses (which lose sadly in the translation) might almost be by an Italian George Herbert; but the name of the unambitious author is forgotten. (F.)



Thou sleepest ch. beloved. But Thy heart
 Sleeps not, for watches still where'er Thou art.
 Oh Land-Divine! if ere Thy thoughts
 could see.....
 I think... No sups... Now I shall die for thee.

Shall I for me! O God, and what am I?
 And what my love, in face of love so high?
 O Mary, ere thy heart thy Jesus held,
 And love him now, the mere low love grows cold!



Tu dormi oh dolce amor, ma intanto il core
 Non dorme, ma soriglia a tutta l'ora.
 Oh misello e puro agnello
 A che perui Ammi Tu
 Oh Amore immenso!
 A morire per te, risponde, io penso.

E d' a morire per me Tu pensi, oh Dio
 E ch' altro amare fuor di Te più io?
 Oh Maria speranza mia
 S'io poc' amo il tuo Gesù
 Non ti sdegnare!
 Amalo tu per me, s'io non so amare.

BEHOLD, MY HEART.

MIRA, CUOR MIO.

MIRA, cuor mio durissimo,
Il bel Bambin Gesù.
Che in quel presepe asprissimo,
Or lo fai nascer tu.
Illumati, consumati,
D'amor per Lui, su, su!

Per vestir te di gloria
Guarda, che ignudo Ei sta!
Per farti aver vittoria
Scende a combatter già
Festeggialo, corteggialo,
Vedi, per te che fa!

Per farti l'alma accendere,
Patisce freddo or qui.
E per far te risplendere,
Fra l'ombre Ei comparì
Deh, amalo ; deh, bramalo!
S' Egli t'amò così.

BEHOLD, MY HEART.

(THE LAST SONG OF IDA.)

BEHOLD my heart, the Babe divine,
This night, He left the skies.
And born on earth for sins of thine,
In that rough manger lies.
Canst thou behold, and yet be cold?
Or look with careless eyes?

And see, He naked lies, that thou
Shouldst walk in garments white.
To make thee conqueror, even now,
He comes to toil, and fight.
With welcome sweet His coming greet,
And sing His praise to-night.

He came in winter's frost and cold,
That thou shouldst warmèd be.
That heavenly light should thee enfold,
In midnight shades came He.
Come, meet Him here, with love sincere,
For much hath He loved thee.

THE STORY OF EMILIA AND HER SISTER.

I WANT to tell, before I go any farther, about something that happened in Edwige's family, because then I can tell about two such dear little children, and how they lived; and I think it is a more interesting story than any of the others that I have left. After poor Assunta* was taken away, her husband, to the dismay of his children, chose after a very short time to marry a young widow with two children. She was younger than any of his own children, and the wonder was that she should have wished to marry him; but he was a handsome, agreeable man, and earning good wages, and she was poor, and had been obliged to go to service, so that, at first, her condition really seemed to be improved by the marriage, more particularly as he took one of her children, and her first husband's relations took the other. However, she did not find her condition improved when her husband died, as he did before long, and left her with another baby; and everybody said that it was all her own fault, and nobody seemed to pity her much, excepting Edwige. So, after

* Edwige's mother: see story of Edwige, pp. 210, 211; not to be confused with Fortunato's Assunta, p. 166.

living from hand to mouth for a long time, being in great want, she finally took service with a family in Florence, hiring a room outside of Porta Romana for the two little children.

One very cold day in the winter, as I was sitting at work in my room, one of the servants came to the door, looking very much puzzled, and said: "There are two little girls downstairs at the street door, and—I think I do not quite understand what they mean—it seems to me that one of them says she is Edwige's sister." No wonder the man could not understand; she was younger than some of Edwige's grandchildren! Edwige started up, dropping her knitting-work, and ran downstairs. A little later she re-appeared, bringing with her two such poor little children, one of eleven and the other of four years old; and, as she led them into the room, she said, laying her hand affectionately on the shoulder of the youngest, "This is my little sister!" They were both pretty children, but dressed in thin and scanty clothes, which had evidently been worn out by some one else before they came to them, and had been washed till the colour was all gone, and mended until they would bear mending no longer. They both wore somebody else's cast-off shoes: those of the elder child too small for her, those of the younger much too large—both pair so ragged that they would hardly hold together. And their poor little icy-cold hands were covered with chilblains; and in that condition, on one of the coldest

days in the year, the little creatures had walked in from two miles outside Porta Romana! Of course the first thing was to warm and feed them; we made them sit down by our fire. The eldest, Emilia, drew the little one into the same large chair with herself, and sat with her arm about her, looking perfectly happy. And then, I asked them much about their life, and I found that they were really living all alone and keeping house by themselves. Emilia acted as mother to the little one, washed and dressed her, and took care of their one room; and spent all her advanced* time in braiding straw, by which she earned a few centesimi. The *real* mother came to see them once a week, and brought them what money she could. But I think no child ever had such a gentle and devoted little mother as Emilia was to the little Raffaellina. She fed her before she would eat herself, standing over her and giving her a mouthful at a time, stroking her hair, and calling her all sorts of affectionate names when she looked at her,—her face all lighted up in a manner that made her for the moment as beautiful as a Madonna, though she did not know it; and when, after much coaxing, she induced the shy little creature to come up and give me a kiss, I could see that she felt she was conferring a great pleasure on me. I asked how Raffaellina, who was lame

* Spare time: but see footnote on p. 275 for subsequent use of the term.

with chilblains, and scuffled about sadly in her great ragged shoes, had been able to walk so far; and was told that Emilia had carried her much of the way in her arms. When they left, Emilia, who appeared overcome with gratitude for the meal and the seat by the fire, said they would pray for me that night before they went to bed. I asked her to pray for the recovery of my father, who was ill at the time; and she answered very earnestly, "I will pray that he may live longer than I!" I told her she must not pray for that, because my father was an old man, and it would be the same as praying to die before her time; and then she said, "At least I will pray that he may live quite as long as I do." Now as they were going away I remembered that a good American lady had lately given me some money to spend for the poor, and I felt certain that I should find no one any poorer than these little children; so I asked Edwige to take them with her and buy them some warm clothes, and some shoes and stockings, which she did. And she told me afterwards that when they parted, little Emilia, after trying in vain to express her thanks to her own satisfaction, finally said, "*Now I will pray the Lord to make the Signorina's father live longer than I shall; and I do not care if it does make me die a little sooner!*"

Emilia is now nearly seventeen, and, as the family where her mother lived as servant has moved away from Florence, the mother and daughters are all once

more living together; and Raffaellina goes to a nuns' school, where they are kind to her, and give her her dinner every day, and teach her to do beautiful sewing and embroidery. But poor Emilia—she is one of those who never live long;—for the two past years has been gradually fading away with a sort of slow decline. The doctor has told her now that her life cannot be long, and she is very ready and happy to go. She is still able, on warm days, to sit outside the door with her straw braid. At Easter the priest proposed that he should bring her the communion, but she said she should so like to go to the church once more; and she did go there, taking a few steps at a time and resting between. She is very careful that Raffaellina should not eat from her plate, nor do anything else which she thinks might put her in danger of taking the complaint. “Not,” she says, “that I think it a hard thing to die, but I do not want her to have a long illness such as I have had.”

THE GOLDEN GIRDLE.

CINTURINO D'ORO.

SON piccolina, non ho che quindici anni,
E son segnata al libro dell' amore ;
M' hanno levato i miei puliti panni,
E m' hanno messo un vestito da bruno.
Vestito nero e cinturin d'argento,
Amane uno e lass' andarne cento.
Vestito nero e cinturino d'oro
Lassa andar cento ed amane uno solo.

THE GOLDEN GIRDLE.

I AM young and little ;—only just fifteen,
Yet in Love's book my name is written down.
They have taken off my maiden garments' sheen,
And put me on to-day my bridal gown.
' Black gown and silver girdle,' so they say,
' Love one, and let a hundred go their way,'
' Black gown, and golden girdle,' say to me,
' Love only one, and let a hundred be.'

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE TO THE SONG OF THE GOLDEN GIRDLE.

THIS *rispetto* alludes to the dress, which, as many old people can remember, was once worn by Contadine brides near Florence. It consisted of a black silk dress with a golden girdle: the hair was dressed in a knot, and covered with a scarlet net, to which was attached a long golden ribbon, falling down on the shoulder; and a pearl necklace and earrings completed the costume. On the Sunday *preceding* the wedding, the bride was expected to appear at church in a gown of fine woollen, with *silver* girdle and ribbon. These ornaments were afterwards kept to be worn in religious processions, or on other grand occasions. As the old lady says who has just dictated to me these particulars, and who is now sitting beside me while I write, "There were beautiful brides in those days, and *no danger of mistaking a contadina for an artisan.*" The bride on her wedding day was accompanied by all the married women of both families, wearing their own wedding dresses; only the bride's mother stayed away, as the occasion was considered too trying for her feelings.

THE STORY OF GEMIGNANO AMIDEI.

IN one of the pictures of S. Zita (the one where she is giving bread to some poor people at the door), the old man leaning against the side of the door and holding out his hat, is Gemignano Amidei, who can tell more, perhaps, about old times in that wild country, than any one else living. He has been, himself, afflicted beyond the usual lot of humanity, having seen all his family taken away before him. And such a beautiful family as he had, when I first knew him! His eldest daughter, poor Angelina, whom I never saw more than once, went to service, and died young, away from home. The other daughter, poor Maddalena, a most beautiful girl, indeed the acknowledged beauty of all that part of the country, was to have married a distant relation, the eldest son in the wealthiest of all the contadino families. She went to the Maremma one winter with his family, and they made her work beyond her strength: her business was to follow the sheep, and I was told by another relation that they used to make her wade through the streams on the way, carrying two or three lambs at once. She was attacked by Maremma fever, and no care was taken of her for

some time: at last they sent her home, and she broke down on the journey, and died at Cutigliano, only eight miles from her father's house. Soon after this, Gemignano's wife, Agatina, was missing from the doorway where, year after year, I had seen her sitting with her distaff. Perhaps she could not survive her beautiful daughter, and she followed her soon. Then Gemignano had only his son left, a strong, very handsome young man, whom I knew only by sight, but others told me that he was good and industrious and kind-hearted, and altogether a most lovable character. He was married, and had three pretty little children. One day he was out cutting trees, and a friend who was with him at work, and was cutting a fir-tree, said: "Stand away, this tree is going to fall!" And he said: "Keep on cutting, it will not fall where I am; I know more about cutting trees than you do!" And those were the last words that ever he spoke. The tree fell, and he fell under it. They took him up insensible, and carried him into a house near by, where he breathed for a few hours, but died before the evening, without ever recovering enough to recognise his father and wife and children, who all came to him.

And so poor old Gemignano was left alone, with the burden of the little family on his hands; the young widow, who was at first half distracted, and four small children—for a little girl was born soon after her father died. *And the old man, who is now eighty, works for*

*them all.** In the summer he carries beams on his shoulders, from the woods where they are cut to the road where they are loaded; but he is no longer strong enough for such heavy work, it hurts his chest, and he cannot do more than half a day's work at a time. Half a franc is as much as he can earn. But they own the little house, and Teresa, the widow, goes out washing, or to work by the day on the farms, and the little boys go for wood; and they have a little help from one and another, and so they live from day to day, never knowing for long beforehand how they are going to live.

* Oh—faithless reader!—will you yet say the story of St. Christopher is untrue?

LA FOGLIA DEL GRANO.

Fossi sicuro l'amor mio sentisse,
Ad alta voce io vorrei cantare.
Ma ci hanno separato valli e monti,
Questa mia voce non ci puole arrivare.
Ci hanno separato la foglia del grano,
E non mi può sentir, perch' è lontano.
Ci ha separato la foglia dell' uva
E non mi può sentir da casa sua.
Ci ha separato la foglia dell' oppo,
E non mi può sentir, lontan è troppo.

THE LEAVES OF MAIZE.

OH, I would sing aloud, if I but knew
That while I'm singing, one I love could hear ;
But hills and vales and mountains part us two,
The song, though sweet, can never reach her ear.
And we are parted by the fields of grain ;
She cannot hear me, I may sing in vain.
The vines, with wandering shade, between us are ;
She cannot hear me from her window far.
And we are parted by the poplars green ;
She cannot hear the whispering leaves between.

THE STORY OF TERESA AND PETRUCCI.

Now, passing by the pilgrim in the picture of St. Zita at the well, a man of whom I know nothing, I come to the picture which represents a *Christian in affliction*,* and is an illustration to the hymn :

“Quasi neve che al sole si strugge.”

The hymn did not exactly suggest any picture, so I thought I would put in a likeness of Pietro Petrucci, who is certainly, I think, a Christian, and one of the most afflicted whom I ever knew. It is not very much, though, that I have to tell about him. He is a stone-mason who lives at Piansinatico, a little village about four miles below l'Abetone, on the Tuscan side. He has a brother who is a farmer, and the two brothers married two sisters, Barbara and Teresa, who look exactly alike, and both have the excitable, sensitive, affectionate and rather poetical character which is not uncommon among the mountain people, and which I have already described in the story of Metilde Seghi. Pietro and his wife Teresa never had any children, and as he was a good workman, and every one liked him, he always had plenty to do, and earned more than was needed to supply their very moderate wants. In course of time he laid by enough to buy, (besides his house

* Not given in this book, but I could not omit its story.

and little garden) a piece of waste ground, from which, working in his advanced * time, he cleared away the stones and thistles, and finally made a good field of it, where he raises beans, potatoes, etc. And Teresa used to go out nursing, and was considered a great authority in all cases of sickness. So they were quite prosperous people, and very much respected by all their neighbours. But about nine or ten years ago—I cannot tell exactly the time, though I remember very well when it happened—poor Teresa was taken ill, and some mysterious trouble attacked her eyes, which became inflamed, and began to lose their sight. Pietro, who had no one in the world to care for excepting his wife, was almost beside himself with distress: he took her to Bologna to see one Professor, and to Pistoja to see another; he tried every remedy that any one would suggest, he spent all his money and went in debt for more,—and the poor woman went blind after all! “I have ruined myself with Professors,” he said to me, “but I would not mind that, if it were not that they made her suffer so much, and then did her no good after all!” Having finally given up all hope, he has devoted his life ever since to the sole object of making her as happy as he can in her darkness. In old times, before their misfortune, he used often to go and work

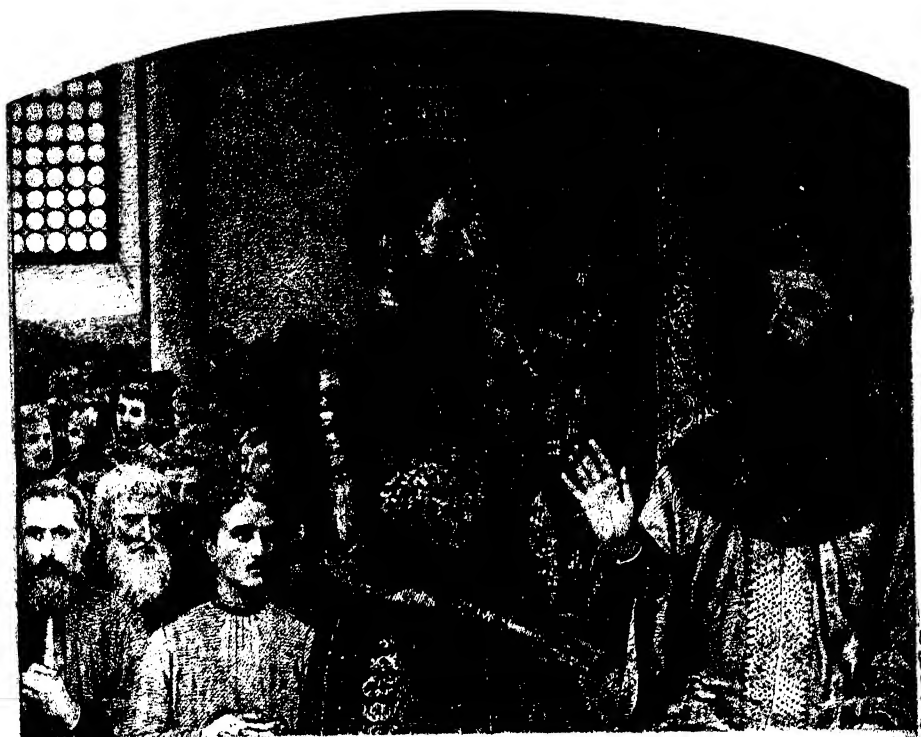
* After hours, Francesca means, I think, or before them, in the early morning.

away from home, and sometimes he would stay for several days, and so he was constantly earning money; but now he will never leave Teresa on any account. He contents himself with doing what work he can find to do in the neighbourhood of Piansinatico, whether for high wages or low; and when there is no building going on, he goes to cut trees, or to load logs, or anything else, so only that he does not have to go away from Teresa. In the morning, before he goes to work, he makes the polenta, and fills the water-pitcher, and puts the house in order (doing all a woman's work), and then he leads her to her chair, and gives her her distaff and the wool—for she can spin without seeing—and arranges the polenta, and anything else there is to eat—when there is anything else—on the table within reach of her hand; and then he tries to find some friend who will come and sit with her, at least part of the time while he is away. And then he goes to his work; but I think he always counts the minutes until he is with her again. On Sundays, or in the evening, he reads to her, if any one will lend him a book; but there are very few books at Piansinatico. His thought for her runs into everything: I do not think it can be accidental, that in his little garden he plants none but sweet-scented flowers, which of course are the only ones she can enjoy. He does not care for the hollyhocks and sunflowers which please his neighbours, but he has plenty of lavender and other sweet

herbs, and sweet-william, and the most beautiful sweet roses that are anywhere to be found. In the season when these are in blossom, the whole house is filled with the perfume. Teresa feels her misfortune very heavily, as is usually the case with those who go blind late in life, and it makes her very helpless: still, she is pretty resigned. She still retains her place as medical adviser to the whole settlement: indeed, the neighbours generally come to her for counsel and sympathy in every case of sickness or misfortune, of whatever nature. But in all the years since this trouble came upon them, as Pietro has not been able to earn so much money as he did when he used to travel about, he has never succeeded in paying his debt,—the debt that he made when all the different medical professors were trying experiments on poor Teresa. And now the man who lent him the money to pay all those people for what was of no use, says that he cannot wait any longer, and it must be paid this summer. So Pietro thinks he shall have to sell his land, the field that he worked so hard to buy, and harder still to make fit for cultivation. He and his wife will be much poorer after that, and I can see that he has a heavy anxiety on his mind. But he is very patient, and never speaks about his troubles unless I ask him some question. There is only one terror that he cannot look in the face, and that he tries always to keep out of his mind: the fear that he may die before Teresa!

EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE DRAWING OF ST. CHRISTOPHER AND THE KING.

OF the five drawings with which Miss Alexander has illustrated the legend of St. Christopher, the four given to Oxford, and photographed in the terminal numbers of this book, are without any debate the most beautiful and true designs that have ever yet been made out of all the multitude by which alike the best spiritual and worldly powers of Art have commended to Christendom its noblest monastic legend. The perfect feeling and deep solemnity of those four designs were, in the Oxford series, better left, it seemed to me, in their serenity, without the mingling of feebler interest in the prefatory drawing. But I make the series here complete, first, as showing the rise of the whole conception in Francesca's mind; and, secondly, because this drawing gives an especially interesting example of the exultation in lovely detail which is common to all sincere, happy, and perfectly gifted religious artists. The established rules of conventional piety dressed angels in flannel, and saints in sable; but Angelico spends day after day in enamelling their wings, and Carpaccio sometimes blinds us to St. George with the gold of his armour, or loses the Queen of Sheba in the pattern of her brocade.



At such a name the King upraised his hands,
And raised a cressant humilgen his eyes;
The cavalier, who hid not understand,
For he was still a heathen, even then;
Then near the King, and softly he demand,
I pray thee, master, than wilt tell me here,
When Satan's ruin occurs, thou dost not fail
To make some sign, while all thy face grows pale.

The King, who led with kindness ever flows,
Made answer, now, dear Christopher attend;
That sign is left behind, if thou wouldst know;
By my Lord, my Saviour, my best friend.
My weapon it is, and Satan is the foe.
When I hear of hope, my spirit is afraid,
But great his strength is, greater yet his art,
And more than death he hath affright my heart.



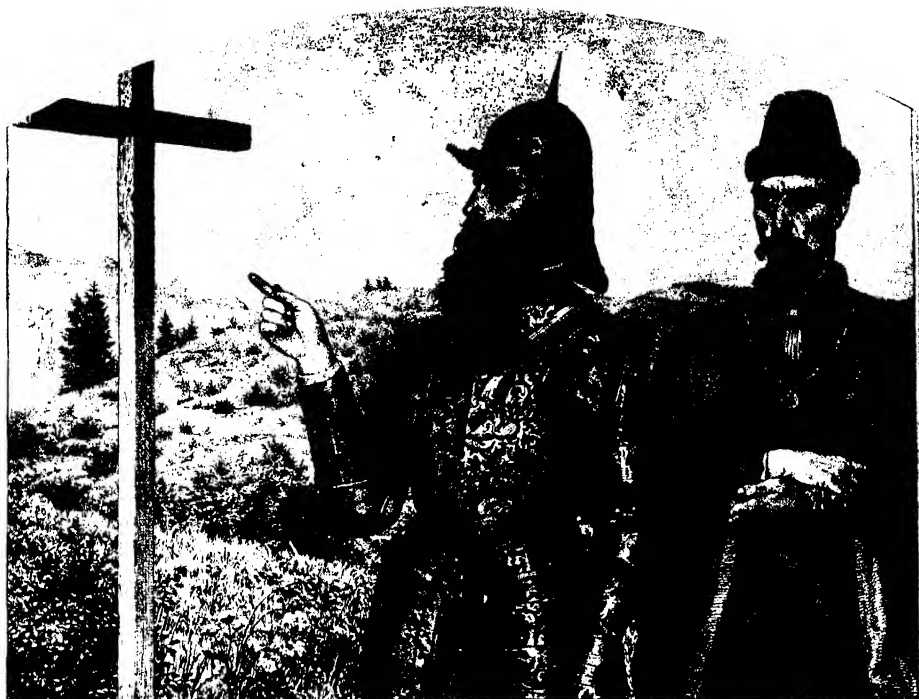
Lia mano in fronte subile ponete,
Col segno della croce si segnate.
Il segno Re Christopher vedete.
Ma non sapendo quel che denotava,
Che il lume della Fede non aveva,
Si accese al Re, e così addimandava:
Cosa vuol dir, Signor, quando sonite
Tal nome, vi segnate, e impallidite?

Rispose il Re, eh' era pur di bonade.
Ma, perch'è mio, Christopher mio,
Del segno che **Cost** per suo padre
Lasciò qui in Terra, l'amoreo **Cost**
Che il diavolo Demonio con la sua falsitade,
Si impada e da me vada in odio,
Sì tanta le sue insidia, e sì tal sort,
Tanto in inganna suoi più che la morte.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER
And the King.

Nor could this book have sufficiently represented the simplicity of cheerfulness, which has made Francesca's companionship so precious to the poor, unless this design had shown her sympathy with all that is brightest and minutest in the dress alike of the earth and its inhabitants—alike in the gemmed coruscation of the King's crown, the grace of the dancing grass, and the fringed flame of the wayside knapweed.

Instead of the withdrawn ballad, I will ask Francesca to tell us, in next number, the story of St. Christopher in her own words.



Saint Christopher

What sign, the warriors said, what may it be
For me, if never saw its like before.
The rebel spirit raised his eyes to see,
When turned his back toward it, trembling sore.
Heem out his wicked mouth the flames had flew,
And thence spoke, whom he could speak once more:
Alas, alas that I hope lest thy soul
Hesperie isen me, I must tell the whole.

Behold the sign of **Jesus** my great foe,
Who both constrain heaven, night and day;
Who when that could give me shame and woe,
He died, and dying took my strength away!
When thou, said Christopher, art far below
Thou **Jesus**, if his sign can thee dismay;
Thou hast received me, when I must part;
To him I quit my service and my heart.

Dis se allora il guerrier, Chi oegno è quello:
Che mai tale non vidi in vita mia.
Alzando gli occhi lo spirito a Dio ribello,
Le spalle ad un tratto alla croce velò,
Vomito dalla bocca il fuoco bello.
Di chiamme, ed a Cristoforo rispondea:
Alimi che per la salica e il frutto!
Forza, mi è che ti richiami il tutto.

Di Cristo mio nemico ecco il gran segno
Che mi sferza e flagella a tutte l'ora!
Volte m'è sopra quel duro legno
Per accrescer a me pena e dolore.
Dunque **Cristo** è uom di te più degno.
Dunque l'insegna sua ti dà timore?
(Di dare il Cavalier) la mi puoi dare;
Io ti lascio, e **Sei** voglio seguire.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER
at the Cross.

THE PALACE ON HIGIL.

WIEN THE STAR.

SULLA BELL' ALTURA

IN alto, in alto, vo' farmi un palazzo,
In alto, in alto, sulla bell' altura!
Intorno, intorno, vo' stendere un laccio
A tradimento, per tradir la luna.
A tradimento per tradir le stelle,
Perchè restai tradito dalle belle.
A tradimento, per tradir il sole,
Perchè restai tradito nell' amore.

QUANDO LA STELLA.

E QUANDO partirò da questa terra,
Saran contenti i nemici mia.
O ch'io vada per mar, o sia per terra,
Per avisarti manderò una stella.
Quando la stella sarà giunt' al prato,
Prega per me, che sono ammalato.
Quando la stella sarà giunt' in via,
Prega per me, che son in agonia.
Quando la stella sarà fatta chiara,
Prega per me, che sono nella bara.

THE PALACE ON HIGH.

ON high, on high, my palace I will rear,
On the high mountain let me build it soon !
With snares about it, stretching far and near,
With cords of treachery, to entice the moon.
With cords to catch the stars, and make them fall,
Since fairest things to me were traitors all.
With cords deceitful, to entrap the sun,
Since love with treachery has my life undone.

WHEN THE STAR.

WHEN I shall die, and dwell on earth no more,
At which my enemies content will be ;
Where'er death find me, if on sea or shore,
I'll send a star to tell the news to thee.
When first by yonder field the star you see,
Then know that I am sick, and pray for me.
And when the star has reached the road near by,
Then pray for me, I am about to die.
And when the star grows large, and bright as day,
Then pray for me, for I have passed away.

THE STORY OF BEATRICE AND HER SONS.

(Part of this story has already been quoted in the sixth lecture of the 'Art of England,' but it is right that in this book it should be read unbroken.)

OF Beatrice of Pian degli Ontani, whose portrait stands at the beginning of the book, I have written a little account in the preface, but there are many more things which I should like to tell about her. Of her eight children (of whom five are now living) two were poets. Of the youngest of these, Angelo, I shall have something to tell farther on.

Poor Beppe, the eldest, whom I never knew, inherited his mother's peculiar gift, and was an improvisatore; and when he and his mother sang together, (that is, alternately, keeping up a conversation in verse, she singing one ottava and he answering it with another, after the fashion of mountain poets,) it is said by those who had the good fortune to hear them, to have been a thing never to be forgotten.

Beppe was more like twin brother than son to Beatrice; they were so much alike, in their difference from the rest of the world, that they could understand each other as no one else could understand them. He had, besides the poetical gift, extraordinary beauty, strength,

and courage; and *he never, in anything, gave a sorrow to his parents until he left them.** But when the sorrow did come, it was such as few, I hope, have to bear in this world.

He had been employed, with some other young men of the place, in charcoal burning; and his companions amused themselves by seeing how heavy burdens he could carry, as he was stronger than any of the others. At last they made a bet that he would not be able to carry three bags of charcoal, weighing two hundred Italian pounds each, up a steep ascent where (as Beatrice said when she told me the story) ‘a mule could not have gone.’ He won the bet, but it cost him his life.

He broke a blood-vessel, and was only just able to reach his home, where he took to his bed, and died in a few days. If I remember rightly, he was only twenty-two years old. With Beppe’s loss the light seemed to go out of Beatrice’s life, and she never, she told me, could sing so well again.

Still she bore her loss with wonderful courage. It is her habit, when telling of anything that has happened to her, to end her story always with the words “Grazie a Dio!” And as I noticed that she said those words just the same when she told of a trouble as when

* This form of virtue, observe, is wholly inbred, not taught; it is pure “human nature” in its noblest races, and the most intellectual and refined examples of them.—J. R.

she spoke of a good fortune, (while yet, from the tone of her voice, I knew it was not an empty form of words with her,) I asked her the reason, and she said, "We must thank the Lord most when He sends us trouble, because that is when He loves us best."

Beatrice was sometimes treated with great honour. I remember one day, when she came over to l'Abetone to see the giostra of S. Pellegrino,—— But before I tell of her visit, I ought to tell what the giostra is. It is a sort of theatrical performance, carried on in the open air, and usually representing the life of some saint, or other religious subject. Some beautiful place is always chosen for the giostra, where the ground has a little the form of an amphitheatre, and the spectators sit or stand on the grass, while the performers *sing* the words to a peculiar, and, it is said, very ancient chant, with an accompaniment of violin and violoncello. With those strong mountain voices, every word can be distinguished at a great distance.

Now, as I was saying, Beatrice had come to see the giostra, and had been listening to it with great interest from our window. It was over, and the great crowd of excited people flowed back from the field into the road, the singers among them in odd costumes of their own invention. When they caught sight of Beatrice, they all gathered under the window, and called earnestly for an ottava. She extended her hand, and instantly every sound was hushed, the crowded road was as still as any solitude, while she sang, in her clear beautiful voice, two or three

ottave, in which she expressed her admiration of the giostra and the singers. All I can remember now is that she said the Pope himself might have learnt something more of Christian doctrine if he had seen that giostra.

A few minutes later, as she passed through the crowd on her way home, a man met her with a glass of wine, and, bowing respectfully, said, "I want the greatest poet of our mountain to drink from my hand." Without speaking, she stooped and drank from the glass which he held, touching it only with her lips. The grace with which they both went through this ceremony has remained always in my mind.

At this time Beatrice used generally to wear the old-fashioned contadina dress in which I took her likeness: a scarlet bodice, blue handkerchief, garnet necklace, and gold ear-rings; her long linen sleeves were ruffled at the wrist; when about her work she used to push them above her elbows, as I drew them. On grand occasions she would wear a white embroidered veil, handkerchief, and apron, all of which she had when she was married. No picture can give an idea of her beauty, because it is impossible to represent the light in her eyes, which seemed always to come from within, and not from without. Whenever I see the sun shining into deep water, it always makes me think of Beatrice's eyes; they were more like that than anything else.

Though they call her Beatrice of Pian degli Ontani, she really lives at Pian di Novello, a mile or two away

from the little village that gives her its name. But I ought to say that a *plain*, in that part of the country, means only a piece of ground where any one can walk without extreme danger of slipping off. Her house is in the valley of the Sestaione, and if there is any place in the world more beautiful than that valley, I never saw it. It is all shut in by high steep mountains, partly wooded, partly rising in great walls of rock, with beeches and alders clinging wherever they can find anything to cling to, and, where there is not enough earth for these, wild roses, blackberry vines, and all sorts of mountain flowers, growing in the very cracks of the stones. The bottom of the valley is full of broken rocks, which have fallen or been washed down from the mountains in spring; and over and among these the little river Sestaione goes down to join the Lima, in a succession of green pools and white cascades. The sun shines very warm in that narrow valley, for all it is so high; and strawberries grow everywhere, even between the stones in the middle of the stream; and in the summer days, when I went there, the air was all scented with the "Life everlasting"* (as we call it in America), and there was no sound but the sound of the water, and the occasional humming of a bee; and there were so many butterflies and other little bright-coloured noiseless creatures, busy among the flowers! On one side of the valley is Beatrice's farm, in a place where the hill is not so steep; and her stone house, standing among a few cherry trees. Opposite

* A little wild yellow amaranth, with a spicy perfume.

to the house, just across the Sestaione, is a large and very singular rock, detached from the precipice behind it, and appearing like a tall square tower of regular shape. About this rock, Beatrice, who knows every story and legend in the country, tells a very strange story indeed, and I will tell it, as nearly as possible, in her words.

“That tower is the tower of the Fattucchio. I do not know who the Fattucchio was, but they say he built it very long ago; and there is hidden treasure there, which no one can ever find. For you know that after any treasure has been buried for a hundred years, the Evil One takes possession of it, and will not let any one have it. But there was a woman once who saw the treasure in that tower. She had gone close to the tower on the side toward the mountain, where it is not easy to go, and she saw an open window, and she went and looked in, and saw a chamber in the tower; and in the chamber she saw the figure of a woman dressed as a nun, all of gold, laid in a golden coffin, and by her side a golden axe. When she saw all this she was frightened, and ran away and told her neighbours, and they all came to look, but when they arrived the window was shut, and no one was ever able to find even where it had been. If the woman had not so lost her head when she looked into the tower, she might have left her rosary on the window-sill, and then the evil spirits could not have shut the window. At another time, a little girl, who used to follow the sheep, found half a paul every day, for some time, in the same place, close

under the tower; but after she began to talk about it, she never found any more.

“But they say that in Rome they have certain books, with everything written in them that has ever happened in the world; and on Christmas eve, every year, they take out those books and read them all night long until the morning. And in one of those books it is written that there is buried treasure at the distance of a hundred steps from Riofredi; and Riofredi is the ancient name of the Sestaione.”

On that year when we heard the giostra of St. Pellegrino, she used to be much with us, generally coming over to pass Sunday with us at l'Abetone. On the last Sunday of our stay there, knowing that we must part for a long time, we walked part of the way home with her, up the side of the mountain which divides l'Abetone from the valley of the Sestaione. When the sun had set we took leave of her; she said a few parting words to each of us, but when she came to my mother (who was her favourite) she laid both her hands on her shoulders, and stood looking straight into her eyes for a minute, while a new and strange light came into her face, making her appear quite different from her usual self. Then she sang, with more sadness in her voice than I had ever heard in it before, an ottava of farewell; and having done that, she turned without another word, and walked away quickly up the steep path. I can see her now, as she

looked in the clear summer twilight, walking between the low firs and beeches with her firm light step, never looking back, but just raising her hand once to wipe the tears from her eyes, before she quite passed from our sight.

I have spoken, in the preface, of Beatrice's troubles with her sister-in-law, Barbara. It seemed a strange ordering of Providence, that Barbara, in her extreme old age, after the death of her brother, should be left as helpless as an infant in the hands of the woman whom she had so persecuted: during her last illness, which lasted many months, Beatrice was her devoted nurse and companion. I asked Beatrice once if Barbara, before she died, ever expressed any regret for her treatment of her. "When she was dying," said Beatrice, "she took my hand, and said, 'Addio Beatrice.' That was enough, was it not?" And if the words were spoken in the voice in which Beatrice repeated them to me, I think they *were* enough. The family, as I have said, owned a fine farm; but one year the harvest failed, and they were, for the time, very poor. Beatrice thought, if she could see us, we should help her; and so, with her usual energy, she packed a ball of butter and some chestnut cakes in a little basket, that she might bring us a present, and set off from Pian di Novello for Florence, quite alone. She did not know our name, nor where we lived, but she knew that we came from America, and that we were called Lucia

and Francesca ; and as every one at l'Abetone knew us, she supposed that every one in Florence would do the same.

Much of the way she walked ; a strange man carried her for some miles in his baroccio, for charity ; the last part of her journey she came by the railroad. Our house is pretty near the station, and Beatrice, as if guided by Providence, stopped to ask for us at the shop of a wood and charcoal seller, who knew us, and recognised us from her description. He showed her the way, and, a few minutes later, Beatrice made her appearance at the door, and dropped into my arms, cold and tired and hungry, but laughing triumphantly to think that she had accomplished her journey. But I have told enough about my dear old friend, whom I cannot expect others to care for as I do.

So now we come to St. Christopher, of whom the original is Beatrice's second poet son. He has not the peculiar talent of an improvisatore, but he can write verses which seem to me quite beautiful. The letter from Angelo to Rosina, on the ninety-third page, is by him ; and I should have more of his poetry in the book, if it were not for one great misfortune. He was never taught to write ; and though, after he was grown up, and his hands had become stiff with hard work, he managed to teach himself, his writing has always been—— what might be expected. When I told him that I should like to copy any verses that he might

have written down, he brought me quite a pile of papers, so written that I could really hardly make anything out of them. I would not have minded the spelling—I can understand almost anything in the way of spelling; but sometimes half a word was left out, sometimes a whole word, sometimes a whole line; and Angelo could not remember his own poetry well enough to fill up the gaps, as most of it had been composed and written down long before.

There were *three* letters to Rosina, and I could not read the whole of any one; if I must tell the truth, the letter which I give is made up by putting together the intelligible verses of *two* letters; that was the best I could do, and I believe it is all right as far as it goes. Angelo never married Rosina: I asked him, when he gave me the letters, what had become of her, and his only reply was: “After I came back that year from the Maremma, I never looked at her again.” And it seemed to me, though perhaps I was mistaken, that there was a slight tone of contempt in his usually kind voice. “And then,” he went on to say, looking away from my face, and speaking as it were rather to himself than to me, “I came to live in these parts, and then I met this one, and then——.” He did not finish the sentence, but I knew too well the life of hardship and misfortune which that last “and then” stood for. “This one,” was his wife Serafina, who is a very good, patient, hard-working woman, and much

attached to him. As for Rosina, I saw that it would be an impertinence in me to say any more about her; so all that I know is, that in one of Angelo's letters he appeared to be extremely jealous of some new admirer who was coming after her. And also I know this, that his first child was named Rosina.

Angelo is a stone-mason, a very honest, capable, conscientious workman; and he lives in a neat, pretty little stone house, which he built with his own hands, every stone of it, from the foundation to the slated roof, and little niche for the Madonna over the door. (I saw him building it.) And beside it he planted some cherry trees, such as grew about his mother's old house at Pian degli Ontani; and he planted a little bit of a garden, and made a brush fence about it. That branch of wild cherries which I have drawn on the eighty-second page came from one of Angelo's cherry trees; I remember when Serafina brought it to me, and she asked to see her husband's picture, and when I showed it to her (as St. Christopher) she burst into tears, and said, "If Angelo should die, I could never bear to look at that picture, it is so much like him!" He was out of health at the time, and I suppose that was why she felt so: poor man! I am afraid he is out of health now. A few years ago the diphtheria visited l'Abetone and the neighbouring country, and three of poor Angelo's five children were taken—his only son, and his two eldest daughters. They all died in the course of

a month. Neither the father nor the mother were ever the same people again, and Angelo's great distress of mind brought on a complaint of the heart, from which he has suffered ever since.

Besides being a poet, Angelo is a beautiful singer, and a great teller of stories. I remember that one of his stories was a *very* free version of Orpheus and Eurydice. I asked him once, when he began to tell the story, who Orpheus was, just to see what he would say; and he replied, without hesitation: "He was a man who used to play on the violin, and when Eurydice used to go to cut grass for the cattle, he used to sit behind some bushes, just at the edge of the woods, and play on his violin, and sometimes sing to her, so as to amuse her while she worked; but he himself used to keep away out of sight; she could hear him, but not see him. But poor Eurydice, one hot day—you see she used to go barefoot when she went to cut the grass—she trod on a snake, and he bit her, and he was one of the poisonous kind. So she died. Orpheus took it very much to heart; he made a little song about her afterwards—perhaps I can remember it." All this told in a tone of deep sympathy, and as if he were talking about one of his neighbours. But this will be enough about Angelo.

RISPETTI D'AMORI CONTADINESCHI.

Ho seminato una proda d'amore;
Non me n'è nato un maledetto filo!
Non so, se ne divien dall' aridore,
O veramente il seme era cattivo.
Ho seminato laggiù in quel piano,
Credeva fusse amore, ed era grano.
Ho seminato lassù in quel poggio,
Credeva fusse amore, ed era orzo.

E s'è rannuvolato e par che piove,
E s'è turbato le chiare fontane,
E s'è turbato quella dell' amore;
E par che piova e s'è fatto un bel sole!
E s'è turbato quella del' amante,
E par che piova, e il sol da sulle piante.

PIACESSE al Cielo che potessi fare,
La vostra casa vicina alla mia;
L'amor dalla finestra vorrei fare,
Saren du' cuor contenti, anima mia!
Saren due cuor contenti e sinceri,
Saren due cuori innamorati veri.

SONGS OF COUNTRY LOVES.

I SOWED a bank with love, but all in vain,
For never one unlucky blade would grow!
It may be that it failed for want of rain,
Perhaps the seed was bad, I do not know.
But all the seed I sowed on yonder plain,
I thought was love, 'twas only common grain.
And on that hill the seed that I let fall
Was only common barley after all!

The clouds have gathered, and I hear the rain,
The storm has troubled every fountain clear.
Love's fountain ne'er shall flow so bright again!
But stay! The sun's beginning to appear!
Love's fountain trembles when the storm it sees:
But while it rains, the sun shines on the trees.

If Heaven would grant the only joy I seek,
To move thy house and set it close to mine,
From window then to window we could speak,
And in two hearts would full contentment shine.
And in two hearts, with joy too great to tell,
Would love sincere and full contentment dwell.

These rispetti were taught me by Edwige Gualtieri, who learned them when a child at Pian de' Giullari. She apologized for their homeliness, saying that they were only "songs of country loves," but they seem to me pretty: they were the only ones, among many which she knew, that I had never heard before.

I notice that you seem to like some of the more fanciful rispetti, which I was afraid nobody would ever like, excepting the Contadini and me: and so I put but few of that sort in the book. But here is one of Edwige's that she learned from good Signora Margherita; and I think it is pretty, though not much more than a nursery rhyme.

It was in Venice, a fine evening towards sunset, and Edwige and I were leaning out of a window over the Grand Canal, and watching the sunset lights on the old palaces, when all at once a swallow shot by over the water below us, bringing a sudden light that was not like sunset at all into the worn, patient face beside me. Suddenly she seemed to recognize something of her childhood among the decaying magnificences about us, and she repeated the old words, keeping her eyes on the bird till it was out of sight.

ASCOLTA, RONDININA.

Oh Rondinina, che voli per mare
Voltati addietro, e ascolta due parole.
Dammi una penna delle tue bell' ale;
Vo' scriver una lettera al mio amore:
E quando l'avrò scritta e fatta bella,
Ti renderò la penna, Rondinella.
E quando l'avrò scritta e sigillata,
Oh, Rondinina, ne resto obbligata.
E quando l'avrò scritta e fatta d'oro.
Ti renderò la penna, e il tuo bel volo.

HEAR ME, SWALLOW DEAR.

Oh Swallow, flying close along the sea,
Turn back, turn back, and to my words attend.
From thy bright wing one feather give to me,
For I would write a letter to my friend.
And when I've written all, and made it clear,
I'll give thee back thy feather, swallow dear.
And when 'tis written, and the seal is set,
I never more thy kindness will forget;
And when 'tis written all in gold, then I
Will give thy feather back, and see thee fly.

THE LEGEND OF ST. CHRISTOPHER.

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

ST. CHRISTOPHER was the largest and strongest of all men in the world, a terrible man in war; and he served a great pagan king, who showed him much honour because no one could stand against him. And Christopher, seeing that every one feared him, and that there was no other like him, became proud of his strength, for he had not the light of faith, and did not know who gave it to him; and he said that he would serve no unworthy master, but only the most powerful king who lived: and having heard that in a distant country there lived a greater king than his own, he went and offered himself to his service. The new king, who was a Christian, received him very kindly, and held him in much esteem, for his strength, his beauty, and his perfect fidelity, and he made him captain over all his army.

For a long time Christopher was contented in this service, and the country was in great peace and safety, for his very appearance was enough to terrify all his enemies. Though they say that with all his terrible power, his looks were not ferocious, but very noble and beautiful, and he was of a kind heart, and liked to help those who were in trouble; but he was proud, and it

never went well with those who opposed him. And he wore armour inlaid with gold, and when he walked in the sun, he used to dazzle the eyes of all who saw him.

Now one day the king gave a great entertainment to all the principal people in his kingdom; and Christopher, who was his favourite, stood by his side. And there were many musicians and singers present, and Christopher was very happy listening to the music. But after a while he noticed that now and then, in the songs, a name entered that he had never heard before, which was the name of Satan; and every time that he heard it, the king made the sign of the cross and appeared troubled. Pretty soon Christopher came up to his side, and asked him, in a low voice, why he made that sign when he heard the name of Satan: and the king answered, Because I am so afraid of him,—he is always trying to ruin me! “What,” said Christopher, “are you afraid of Satan? Then he must be greater than you are, and I am going to serve him!” So he left the good king, and walked away out of the city in great haste, not exactly knowing where he was going, but feeling angry to think that he had been serving an unworthy master, whom even a name could frighten.

After a while he found that he was entering a wood, and as he walked along where the trees were thick he saw suddenly standing before him a very handsome and stately man, magnificently dressed, who saluted him

with much grace, and extended his hand to him, saying, "Welcome, my Christopher! I was expecting you." "Who are you?" said Christopher. "How do you know me? I can't remember that I ever saw you before!" "No!" said the other, smiling graciously, "you never saw me, but I know you. I am Satan, whom your king and all the other kings are afraid of; and I heard that you were thinking of entering my service, and so I came down into this wood to wait for you; for I knew that you would come this way. You have done well to choose me for a master, for I will give you whatever you ask,—all the pleasures of the world to enjoy; and more wealth than you can spend, and to be honoured and praised by all." "I thank you, Satan," said Christopher; "you speak very kindly, but I do not care so much about any of these things as I do about serving a worthy master, one whom I can really honour. I left the king's service because he was afraid of you: now tell me the truth—is there no one greater than you? No one whom you are afraid of?" "No," said Satan proudly, and stretching himself up very tall; "I never met any one yet who was not afraid of me!" "Then we are agreed," said Christopher, taking his hand: "I will serve you faithfully as long as I live; that is, if I never find any one stronger than you." So they walked along together, Satan talking about all the grand things that he was going to do for Christopher, until, after they had left the wood for some

time, they saw by the roadside a wooden cross, such as one often sees in country places. And Christopher, looking up, said thoughtfully, "What is that, Satan? I never saw anything like that before." Satan raised his eyes, and, as they fell upon the cross, he began to tremble and his face grew deadly pale. "Satan," said Christopher, "you are afraid!" and Satan answered, "I fear Christ, my great enemy, who died upon a cross like that!" "Then," said Christopher, "Christ is greater than you, and I go to serve Him." At this Satan gave a great cry, and his face changed, and became very horrible; and fire came out of his mouth, and he disappeared, leaving a great smoke behind him.

After this we are told that Christopher wandered about the country for a great while asking every one whom he met "where Christ lived;" and some laughed at him, and some thought he was mad, and others were afraid of his great size and warlike appearance, and ran away, and so he found no help. At last, one day, as he was walking over the side of a mountain, he came to a poor little cabin, where an old hermit lived quite alone. The old man was sitting by the door, and when he saw Christopher approaching, in his shining armour, he was much frightened at first, and made the sign of the cross. But Christopher spoke to him very gently: "Father, do not be afraid of me, but help me. I have been so long looking for Christ. Can you tell me where He lives?" And when the hermit heard that

name, his fear all passed away, and he said, "Sit down here by me, my son, and I will tell you all about Christ." So Christopher sat down on a stone by the hermit's side, and the old man told him all the story of the Lord's life,—how He came down from Heaven to save us, and was born in a stable in the winter; and how poor He was, and about His mother; and how the shepherds and the kings of the East came to worship Him. And by the time he had gone as far as that, the tears were running down Christopher's face.

And as the old man went on and told all the rest of the story, Christopher's heart so warmed up with love to this new master, that he felt as if he had never loved any one before: and he said, "Oh, Father, do you think He would take *me* into His service?" And the hermit said, "I know He will, my son, for He never refuses any one; if you want really to serve Him, you must give up all the world and come and lead a penitent life such as I do, in continued fasting and prayer." At that, Christopher looked rather sober, and he said, "But, Father, I am not fit for such a life as that: I think I should die, and what use would there be in it? I have nothing to bring to my Master's service excepting my great strength: can I not use that in some way that will please Him?" The hermit considered for a while, and then he said, pointing to a white river which lay shining in the distance far below them, "My son, do you see that river? They have never been able to



Full quickly then the aged saint replied:
 And if thou wilt but let thy peace unceasingly flow,
 One path there is, one thorny path to see.
 On which, if thou wilt venture, heart and mind
 The rest will bless, as here the thorns abide.
 And thou shalt bear a holy name to shine.
 Behold that mighty river, knowing of me,
 How proudly glories it, tells to me the son.



Il santo vecchio salutò ripose:
 Se conseguirai mai l'eterna gloria,
 Dio non poterai ciò che ti è imposto.
 Oportet hoc te transgredi più meritoria.
 Spina a te sarà uero, ma poi sen torce.
 E te lavorarò santa memoria.
 Mira il gran fiume, Aile, che qui appare.
 Come orgoglioso de' tributì al mar.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER

build a bridge over it that the spring floods would not carry away. A great many people want to cross the river, and cannot unless they have a boat, or unless the water is very low. Now, if you, who are so strong, will go and live by the side of that river, and carry over on your shoulders all who want to pass the waters, that will be a service that the Lord will accept." At this Christopher was very happy; and having taken leave of the hermit, and recommended himself to his prayers, he set off on his journey to the river, which he reached the next day.

And having laid aside his armour, and dressed himself in poor clothes befitting his new occupation, he built himself a little cottage of rough stones and branches of trees, close to the water's edge, and there lived quite alone. And whenever any travellers came that way and wanted to cross to the other shore, he took them upon his shoulders, one at a time, and carried them over. And he never minded how late it was, or how cold, and he was always more pleased when the most work came to his hand. He would now have been quite happy had it not been that, as time went on, the longing to see his Master grew so strong in his heart that he could hardly bear it. Always when he was alone, this was his prayer—that he might see only once the face of Him whom he loved; that was the only reward that he desired for his long service.

One night he was very tired, having passed many

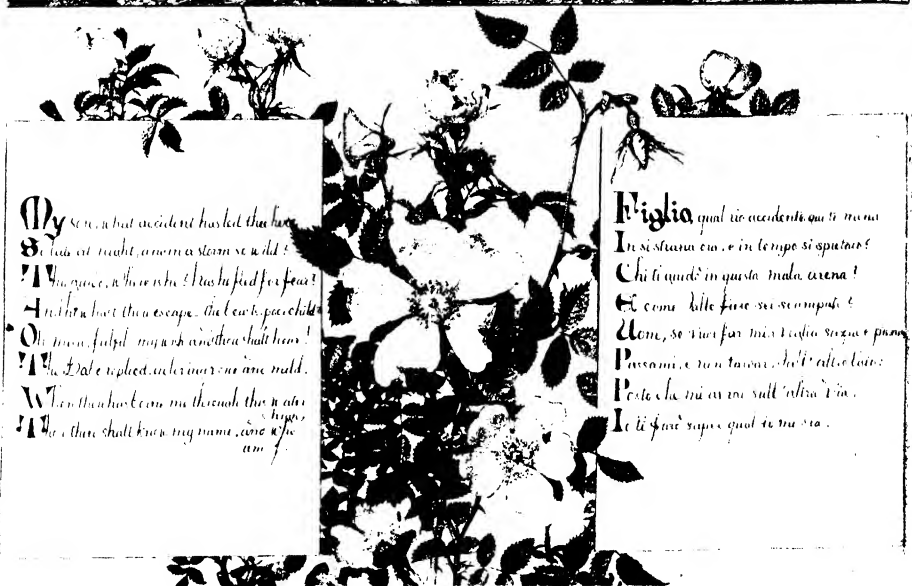
people over the river that day; and there was such a storm that he felt pretty sure no one else would come; so he lay down on his bed of dry leaves to rest. And he was just dropping off to sleep, when he heard, above the whistling of the wind and the beating of the rain and the rushing of the river close by, a cry as of a child in distress, "Christopher, Christopher, come and help me!" He started up and ran out of the door, fearing lest some poor little child was lost in the storm; but not a living soul could he find; and at last he thought that he must have been dreaming, and he went and lay down on the leaves again. But this time he could not sleep.

And before long he heard the same voice calling him again. And again he went to look, and he searched far and near, and called the child, but no one answered. Then he said, "Some one is doing it on purpose; if I hear it again I will not mind." And he lay down on the leaves again, but the little child's cry came so often and sounded so sad, that it seemed to go through his heart, and he could not help going out once again. And now he heard the cry quite distinctly, and he was sure that it was on the other side of the river. So he waded into the stream and crossed it as he best could (for the water was very high), and on the other side he found a little child sitting alone and waiting for him. "Poor little child!" said Christopher: "how did you come here? and who are you?" "Take me

over the river," said the child, "and then I will tell you who I am." So Christopher placed the child on his shoulder and walked into the river again. But as soon as he was in the deep water, the child began to grow heavy—so heavy that he felt that all the burdens that ever he had carried were nothing to this! And the staff that he carried in his hand—it was a large fir tree which he had used for several years—bent under the weight; and with all his great strength he felt sometimes as if he and the child would both go down under the water together. But he clung to the child, and at last, he hardly knew how, he struggled up the shore. He sat down quite exhausted, and placed the child on the grass beside him. And when he could speak, he said, "Little one, who are you? for I thought I was carrying a mountain on my shoulder!" And the child answered, "You have carried more than the world, for I am He who made the world." Then Christopher knew that his long prayer was answered, and he knelt down and worshipped the child, who appeared now all shining with light. And the child told him that his service was accepted, but that henceforward he was called to a nobler service, and must go out into the world and preach, and bring many souls into the light. And Christopher said, "How can I preach, for I have no learning? how can I persuade them?" And the child told him to plant in the earth the dry fir tree that he carried in his hand; and when he did so it

became green and was covered with fresh leaves. And the child said, "When you speak and they will not believe, plant your staff in the ground and it will grow green before their eyes, because with that staff in your hand you carried the Lord!"

I have done as well as I could from memory, and with no book to look at; only Edwige helped me a little, and ended by going off into tears, as she said, "Poor man, how happy he must have been!—only to think of finding out that he had been carrying the Lord! And it makes us so happy to do any little thing for our friends that we love here: if we could only now do some little thing for Him!" I told her that whatever we did for His children we did for Him. "Yes," she said, "that is in the Gospel, but"—and she looked away into vacancy, as if she were trying to see something, as her habit is, when she is thinking,— "I keep thinking, do you not know when our friends die, no matter how much we have done for them, we are always wishing we had done more. Well, I think when we go to heaven we shall feel like that; we shall be so sorry that we have not done more for the Lord Jesus!" And with this comment of Edwige's on St. Christopher I must end.



My son, what accident hast had that has
 Se'ed at night, on a storm so wild?
 'Tis grace, & thou art! Has his fear?
 And thou hast thou escape, but each peace child
 Oh, how fulfil may wish another shall them!
 'Tis I dare replied, as I saw one maid.
 When thou hast seen me through the air,
 'Tis I, thou shalt know my name, come to me

Figlio, qual rio accidenti ou ti mena
 In si strana ora, e in tempo si spaurito?
 Chi ti quid' in questa mala arena?
 E come alle fure sei scompito?
 Ah, se tu per mia figlia sego e puto
 Passami, e non tardar. Ad' alto loir:
 Poste che tu avrai sull' alta d'ira.
 Le ti farò saper qual io tu sia.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER
 at the Shore.

EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE VISION OF ST. CHRISTOPHER.

WHEN Lord Lindsay, the head and captain of all literature relating to early Italian painting, first wrote the complete legend of St. Christopher, in the prefatory chapters, called the 'Mythology' of his "Christian Art," I remember his being much blamed by many members of the English Church for his use of the word, till then reserved for the schemes of Greek Theogony, as applicable to the stories of mediæval Christendom. I do not know in what degree the Catholic Church would also blame him, or how far in its own schools the tale of St. Christopher is proposed for belief as history, or with interpretation, as myth. I could myself much more easily explain Francesca's final version of it as the gradually enriched and sunset-gilded tradition of a dream or vision seen by a hermit ferryman, than I can interpret its incidents as symbolizing any course of facts of spiritual life. Reading it as a myth, I am myself utterly uncertain of the meaning of the king,—the knight, the river, or the oppression felt by the Saint in bearing Him whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light. But, encouraged in my own love

of Tintoret by Edwige's sympathy, I will hope for the reader's pleasure also, in being reminded of Tintoret's figure of St. Christopher in Paradise, bearing the globe of the world, surmounted by a cross, and by whose surface a beam of light descending from the enthroned Christ is reflected in a dazzling star. By which I have always understood Tintoret to mean what Holman Hunt meant by his 'Light of the World,' but with the further lesson, that the visitation which was to sanctify our world for us with eternal day, would come first through the deepest night, and in the heaviest toil of the occupation which was our earthly duty. I think also that Tintoret may have intended to make us feel how greatly the story of St. Christopher had been itself a light to all the Christian, and might be to all the future, world. But none of these lessons by great imaginative interpreters, however probable, guide us to any clear reading of the legend for all men, in the continuous action of it; nor, if any such could be given, would the application be other than forced and untrustworthy. At first thought most of us would suppose the river meant human life; but that river we do not cross, but descend: we are troubled when it is troubled, calm when it is calm—we do not resist its current, nor refuse its peace. Again, in memory of more recent fables, we might think of it as the river of death; but the travellers whom the Saint carried over resumed their journey, and he himself, finally fording it, begins his true ministry

of the Gospel. Take it for some chief time of trouble, and we might, perhaps, without much strain, suppose the meaning to be, that the man who had sustained others in their chief earthly trials, afterwards had Christ for companion in his own;—but this idea would never occur easily and naturally to very simple persons who heard the story;—it is rare that among the many confused evils of existence, any of us can fix on that which once traversed was to be feared no more; and I should be extremely reluctant to offer to my Protestant readers, as the true sense of the loveliest of Catholic legends, the thought that common people were only to have a saint to comfort them in their troubles, while the saint himself had Christ. More and more, as I think over it, I am led to take it, for the memory of what really once happened to some kindly warden of a river ford, bearing by the grace of natural human feeling, comfort afterwards to all who hear of it for ever.

I had not, till Francesca wrote it for us, myself known the sequel of the ministry, with the putting forth the leaves of the pine tree. It is, I suppose, only by the coincidence of thought which runs through all great legend and literature that the putting forth of blossom by the rod of Aaron, and of leaf by the staff of St. Christopher,* teach the life and beneficence

* Compare also the blossoming of the spears of Charlemagne's knights, in the window of Chartres Cathedral representing his life.—Vetault's 'Charlemagne,' plates 4th and 5th.

of the Sceptres of the just—as the for ever leafless sceptre of Achilles, and the spear whose image was the pine, hewn for ships of battle from the Norwegian hills, show in their own death the power of the Kings of Death.

The praise given in a foregoing number to the two drawings of St. Christopher with which I close this book, will not, I believe, seem exaggerated to any of its readers who will compare them with the older renderings of the same subject. I cannot say “subjects,” for as far as I am aware there is no earlier design representing the appeal of the Child at the shore. I should like this drawing to be compared with the one of the Gipsy prophesying, in illustration of Francesca’s mysterious power of giving expression by gesture. It has been observed to me more than once, that her figures are wanting in general ease of action: and this is true; she seems to have no care—in some sort, no power—to give the sway and strength of the moving figure, under ordinary conditions of merely physical action; so that when there is no emotion guiding their gesture, her figures are often stiff—sometimes ill drawn. On the other hand, wherever emotion is to be expressed by the turn of the body or position of the hand or foot, her instinct is not only unerring, but fine beyond all fineness hitherto shown in this kind.

In both these drawings of the Infant Christ,—in that of the mountain-girl comforting her lover, and in

that of the soldier kneeling by his dead love,—the expression is given by a subtlety of truth in the lines of gesture which can neither be explained nor imitated,—its secret is in perfectness of skill guided by purity of sympathy. Look also, in the last plate, at the placing of the child's hand on St. Christopher's cheek.

I had partly hoped, in closing this series of pictures of the hearts of the Italian peasantry, to indicate the main lessons they seemed to bear for us all. But I am abashed before their strength and innocence, and able to draw only this one conclusion of deep practical import,—that the only service we can rightly render them is to love them. For other races, there is much service possible in mere worldly prudence and protective care;—in many and many a foreign land, there are listless hands to be lifted by England's energy, or rude minds to be regulated by her laws, and lighted by her science. But the people of Italy are dying for need of Love: only in returning love for love they become themselves, and enter into possession of their own souls, by the gift of them.

I have learned this not from Francesca only. Strangely, another dear American friend, Charles Eliot Norton, with his wife and family, residing in Italy—I forget how long—(I was with them in their villa near Siena in 1872), were the first to tell me this quite primary character of the Italian peasantry. Their own princes have left them, and abide in their great cities—

no one cares for the mountaineers; and their surprise—in the beginning, at finding any one living amidst them who could love them;—their answer, in the end, of gratitude flowing like the Fonte Branda, as he described them to me, have remained ever since among the brightest and the saddest beacons, and reproaches, of my own too selfish life. I am thankful it has been spared at least to place before my countrymen these records of domestic virtue yet vivid and pure, in the nation which taught us the first syllables of Christ's Gospel,—and who still, amidst the rage of the heathen, and through the flood of the earth's sorrow and sin, bears, in the sacred strength of her charity, the Burden of the Lord.

EDITOR'S NOTE ON "FATTI ALLA FINESTRA."

THIS and the following song have been kept for the final number, because they express in the most pathetic and simple way the guiding power of womanhood, which surely, through all these stories of practical and patient life, is felt to be the chief element of its strength, and the highest source, humanly speaking, of its comfort and virtue.

In the name of all the readers of this book, nor least earnestly in my own, I have to thank its Authoress for the help she has brought us in these days of spiritual darkness and worldly trial, when faith is failing and love is cold; giving us sight of the truth of God, and the sweetness of his creatures, out of the windows of Heaven; as if indeed she had answered, thus, our literal asking,—

“Fatti alla finestra, Donna Mia.”

FATTI ALLA FINESTRA.

“OH fatti alla finestra, donna mia!
Fammelo un po' di lume a camminare!
Che mi si è stretto il buio a mezza via,
Fra pietre e sassi vengo a inciampicare.
E mi si è stretto il buio a mezzo il fiume,
L'acqua m'abonda, e non vedo lume.”

OH CASA BUIA.

“OH casa buia, oh vedova finestra,
Dov' è quel sol che ci soleva dare?
E ci soleva ridere e far festa?
Ora vedo le pietre lacrimare.
Ora vedo le pietre stare in pena;
Oh casa buia, oh finestra serena!”

GIVE ME LIGHT, LADY.

“COME to the window, lady, give me light!
A little light that I may find my way!
For darkness deep is on my path to-night,
Among the stones, I fall, or go astray.
I cross a troubled river, lady mine:
Deep is the water, and no light doth shine.
And darkness found me where the waves were high;
My feet have failed, so deep the waters lie!
So far was I from shore, when darkness came!
And no one answers, when I call thy name.”

NIGHT-FALL.

“OH darkened house, oh widowed window, say,
Where is that sun that lately from thee shone?
That smiled, and made such brightness in the way?
And now . . . What see I? Tears on every stone!
And now I see the very stones in pain;
Oh window, that may never shine again!”

EDITOR'S NOTE ON "TALK UNDER THE OLIVES."

AMONG the many letters under my hand in which Francesca has illustrated with pretty chance-chosen detail the ways of her sweet friends, I have set aside these following pieces for our closing number; the first showing that the gentle nature of Italy is still in her princely maids as well as in her peasant ones; the rest, completing more or less the life of Edwige, and leading on to the loveliest little story in all the book—that of her children's housekeeping.

TALK UNDER THE OLIVES.

ONE day, a young girl had come to see the book by appointment; she is a lovely beauty, the daughter of a duke, from Modena. While she was looking at it, a large party appeared who were leaving Florence and could not come again: she was very sweet and kind, she said she could wait, and they should have her place. So another day was named for her, and she came again. She had just begun the book again, when a friend came from near L'Abetone, a poor contadina, with some eggs, chesnuts, and mushrooms. She was brown, weather-beaten and wrinkled. She recognised some familiar scenes and faces in the book, and the young girl made room for her to sit down beside her, and they looked through it together, talking over it in manners and voices equally sweet, gentle, and self-possessed.

We have had our minds much taken up these last days with the poor old contessa: her will has been read, and does not please *anybody*, and now I have to hear her abused by those whom she was kind to in her life, which is very trying to me. Edwige said

this morning: (it is almost too bad to repeat, but she spoke with the utmost reverence) "Poor lady, I dare say she did as well as she knew how; she could not content everybody,—no one can; you know what the Good Lord Himself said, after He made people in the world: '*I am not afraid but I can take care of you, but it is more than I can do to content you*.' (A camparvi non mi sgomento, ma a contentarvi, sì')." I kept silent, not knowing what to say to such an extraordinary assertion, and she said: "What He says must be true, must it not?" "Certainly," I answered; "but I never heard of His saying that." To which she replied, with solemnity: "It is in the Gospel!"

That reminds me, there is something I wanted to tell you about Edwige, that I forgot when I wrote down the little account of her which you say you mean to have printed. You may not think it of any consequence, but I will just tell you in a few words, because it is the end of the story about the lady who gave her a loaf of bread from her table, the day when she had nothing for the children, and had not courage to ask for it. This lady, whose name was Annina, after the death of her husband was left quite poor, and infirm in health; she had just money enough to buy a piece of bread and keep a roof over her head, but she could no longer afford to keep a servant, as she had been used to do. And I remember when Edwige first came to me, that she could not come very early,

because she always went first to do what she called a "mezzo servizio" for old Signora Annina. She would clean the house and light the fire, and make the coffee for the old lady's breakfast, and then come away to me. And when she left me in the afternoon she went back to her old friend to arrange everything for the night; and she did all her washing and ironing, often sitting up a great part of the night to do it. (I did not know this last until after Annina died, or I could not have let Edwige work so hard.) And all this she did every day for two years; and when at the end of these years Signora Annina was taken with her last illness, Edwige left me altogether, and nursed her night and day until she died. For all this of course she received no pay; the old lady's loaf of bread, and the kindness with which she gave it, secured her a devoted servant in her last years—such a servant as no money could have hired. Signora Annina put out her money to interest to some good purpose. I have just asked Edwige, sitting here beside me, how her strength ever supported the work that she did in those days? She says: "God did it, and not I! I was not able; but the day that I came home from the hospital, up the ascent to S. Francesco, with the baby in my arms, He came with me, and He always helped me."

I am *very* glad that you think it likely St. Christopher was a real person, as all the people for whom the ballad was written, fully believe. (I remem-

ber when Edwige first saw my picture of him, she said, with a sigh: "He looks thin, poor man! Well, I suppose he was so. Who knows whether he found much to eat there in the woods!") No one had ever explained the story to me in any way, but I always imagined that it was an image of spiritual life. A man never satisfied, feeling always that he is spending his strength for unworthy objects, until he hears of the One who is sufficient for us all; then the taking up of His service, and the laying aside of his armour, which I thought meant the giving up of all that he trusted in before. And the long service without reward or consolation, still persevered in, and the willing bearing of all the burdens; until at last, just when he carries the heaviest, and in the darkness and storm, the light shines all at once, and he sees the Face that he loves! With the power that comes to him afterwards of bringing others to the truth. This meaning of the story has always seemed so plain to me, that I have supposed that every one understood it so. The last number of the book will be the best, now that you have written this in it. I felt much all that you said about my contadini friends, and I am so thankful that the little stories about them have expressed, at least *to you*, what I should never have known how to put into words. (I believe in my own heart that there is not much good to be done to *any* people excepting by loving them, but that is certainly true to a peculiar extent of the



SAINT CHRISTOPHER
in the Ford.

Italians, both rich and poor!) I have seen so much good come of the real affection between dear Enrichietta and her contadini, and I think that Italians, all those who are good for anything, are much more governed by their affections than any other people. But foreigners who come among them are too apt to look upon them with contempt, and to take for granted, from the first, that they are not to be trusted. I heard of a lady some years ago (quite a learned woman, and considered intellectual, but rather "new school," especially about religion) who, when making a visit to Italy, lost a large sum of money, in pieces of gold, in a lonely country place. A poor man, working in a field, found the gold and brought it back to her, (as almost any labouring man would do; they are the idle people who do the stealing,) and the friend of this lady, who told me the story, remarked: "She said, she supposed he was *frightened* at the sight of so much money: of course one can't expect these Italians to have any idea of *honesty*; but they are probably more used to stealing small sums!" And one evening, at sunset, in the harvest time, as I was walking with a young lady just come to the country, we met a party of tired reapers going home from their work, and she drew up close to my side, and asked me if I was not afraid of them! She apparently thought that they were brigands.

To-day is Holy Thursday, but it rains so that I cannot go to church; everybody has been preparing

flowers for the Sepolcro: the poor people raise pots of flowers in their windows, and try to have them in blossom for this day. Yesterday morning I saw a poor contadino driving into town with his little boy, in rather a shaky waggon, drawn by a rough little farm horse. They were bringing their presents for the Holy Week: two casks of wine, for the padrone, I suppose, and a beautiful pot of lilies of the valley for *Gesu*. All the country women have cleaned every corner of their houses, and scrubbed all the pans and dishes, and given fresh flowers to the Madonna, and ornamented the shelves with bay leaves. I have been to church; and this morning I felt greatly honoured by a request to lend some of my plants from the terrace for the Sepolcro at Santa Maria Maggiore. It made me feel quite grand—almost as if my terrace were a real garden, (the bees that swarm about it had given me a little the same feeling before), and I sent my largest palm tree and the prettiest of the wall-flowers and pansies. I suppose it is something the same sort of grandeur that poor Fortunato, the blind man at L'Abetone, felt, when he told me that the hotel keeper had offered to buy his house (a poor little cabin just falling to pieces). "I told him," he said, "that I had no need of money; I have everything I want, I live like a gentleman! and it has even happened to me—" here Fortunato raised his voice and waved his hand impressively—"to have a beggar take off his hat to me in

the road, and ask me to give him a soldo per l'amor di Dio!" If being begged of is a sign of social distinction, I cannot help thinking how very high in the social scale Edwige must stand, for she can never keep a soldo in her pocket. The other day, when she and I were talking over the wants of some of our poor neighbours, I asked her why she never came to me to ask for anything for her daughters, as I know that some of them are poor. She replied that she expected to do what they wanted out of her wages; and added, "I always expect to give away my money as it comes in: I know that when I am old you will not let me want for a piece of bread, and I do not see the use of laying up property for the mice to eat after I die! Besides, I have noticed that when people are rich (especially old people) their neighbours are always wishing they would die, and I should not like at all to have that happen to me." She sighed, but I assured her she was in no danger of that kind. To tell the truth, she gives away not only all her money but nearly all her clothes, and we cannot help it. We sometimes *lend* her clothes, instead of giving them, as that is the only way we can be sure she has enough to keep her warm in winter. We tell her to keep them until we come for them, and then of course we never do come for them. But I am wandering away from Giovedi Santa and the flowers. I went afterwards to the church, where a few quiet and devout

people were praying or watching the priest and the custode as they arranged the "Sepulchre in the garden." A little girl of seven or eight years, very small, and carrying in her arms a heavy baby of about as many months, stood outside the altar railing, watching all the proceedings with extreme interest. The priest sent her away two or three times, but she always came back when he was not looking; and indeed she was in nobody's way, and I did not see why he could not let her stay if she enjoyed it so much. However, at last she went, stopping at the door to make a courtesy as well as she could with the heavy burden in her arms; and as she did so she took the baby's little soft hand and guided it to make the sign of the cross.

I wonder why so many ministers always preach as if they were reciting a lesson. My old minister never behaved in that way: he talked in a natural voice, and as if he believed what he was saying; and he preached grand sermons, and once he preached one that was a great deal too grand, and made us feel as if we were not listening to a mortal man. I shall never forget that sermon; it was on the union of the church in heaven with that on earth. And when he had finished it, and had sung a hymn with us, he was taken away suddenly, there in the presence of us all, — carried up to heaven like Elijah, almost! I can never finish being thankful that I was there. Yet judging from what I have seen myself, and

heard from others, I do not think the death of Sig. Rossetti was different from that of most *really* Christian people, excepting in the fact of his having bodily strength sufficient to express plainly what he felt and saw in his last moments. I do not think that it was any more remarkable or beautiful than the death of the little boy of whom you tell in your 'Retrospect,' which I have just been reading, who died singing, and which seemed to me one of the loveliest stories that I ever read. I wish I knew how to explain things: it seems to me that when people come close to heaven the light begins to shine upon them, and they feel the air of the place before they enter the gate. There was Edwige's daughter Cesina, who died last November; a young, pretty woman, as far removed from anything high-wrought or fanatical as possible. Good she was, light-hearted and sunny-tempered, a most affectionate, hard-working wife and mother, pious too, in a simple childlike way. She had a great deal of trouble; she lost a beautiful little girl, and then her husband had a bad fall, which made him an invalid for the rest of his life, and another child that she had was sickly, and she herself had a painful and unusual illness, which lasted for years, and wore her out gradually. She used to work for a tailor as long as she was well enough, and used to help all her poor neighbours by cutting out the clothes for their husbands and boys; and only three weeks before her

death, being no longer able to stand at a table, she knelt down on the floor to cut out some work for a poor woman who could not well afford to pay a tailor for doing it. And for another, who was blind, she did a great deal of sewing. Now, when her life came to its end, in great weakness and suffering, the light having all faded from her eyes, so that she no longer saw the daylight, the Lord Jesus appeared to her visibly, standing beside her, as she told her husband and mother, who were both present. I do not think her mind was wandering, for I saw her some hours later, and she knew me by my voice, and seemed quite conscious of everything about her. She said: "Now I see Jesus; I see all the justice of God!" and afterwards she said to her mother: "Oh mamma, what peace I have now! I wish I could give you this peace!" And she said to her husband: "Do not spend money for my funeral" (Italians of the poorer sort are very ambitious about their funerals); "I should like to have everything neat and clean, but nothing more; I have the Lord Jesus, and I do not want anything else." This is only one little story among so many that I know, and I believe that she really did see what she said.

But is it possible, that it is only lately you have begun to know about the "hidden servants"? I keep thinking, how sad your life must have been, if you have

not known them; for the *outside* of things in the world always seems to be so ugly! And now I understand in what way it is that you think the lives of those poor obscure people which I have written down for you may be useful to others: the Lord grant it may be so! But if it really is such a blessing to know about the hidden servants, I am sure you can find them all about you. Whenever one sees a very sweet, happy, peaceful face (as often happens) in a poor wretched house, or a hospital, or anywhere in the midst of trouble, or if one sees such a face belonging to a very aged or infirm person, all I can say is, that I have never known the sign fail—and I have tried it often—that man, or that woman, has been drinking of the “living water,” and has no more thirst. But what I sat down particularly to write this morning was about the Italian belief with regard to dreams, of which I can tell you some curious particulars (and I am so glad that you do not think, as many of my friends have thought, that I have *wasted my time* in collecting these old women’s stories!) The old-fashioned Florentines believe these things, just as much as the country people do. And first of all, I must tell you one thing, which you can probably account for better than I can. I have spoken to you, I think, about that good American servant who taught me knitting when I was a small child. Her name was Jane Evans; she was a pious, excellent woman, a Methodist; and I was very fond of her. She had passed her child-

hood in the (then) wild country of Vermont, and could tell me no end of stories, such as I cared for, about all sorts of wild creatures, from a catamount to a humming-bird; and among other things, she used to tell me stories about dreams. She believed in them firmly, and would have made me believe in them, if my friends had not laughed so much at poor Jane's ideas. As it is, I remember now only one thing of all that she told me on this subject. She said, that to dream of *deep, still water*, was always a bad sign, and that she always dreamed of it herself before the death of any one whom she cared for. And now, strange to say, I find that the Italians believe exactly the same! They say that *running water*, however, especially if *turbid*, signifies the coming of some material good fortune, in the way of money or other possessions. To dream of climbing a mountain, is a good sign, and foretells some blessing; but the *descent* of a mountain means evil. Flowers growing on the plant signify some happiness coming, but if cut off, they are apt to mean trouble. Roses growing on the bush are the best sign of anything, and mean that our prayers have been granted. All birds bring good luck; a dove brings some particular spiritual blessing. Fruit on the tree brings a blessing—all but grapes, which mean tears,—but if the grapes have many green leaves about them, the tears will end in peace. Green leaves, or green grass, always are a blessed sign: you remember Ida's dream of the green field, just before she died.

Some people are “dreamers,”—their dreams almost always come to pass, while the dreams of others have no significance at all. People who have lost friends are always very anxious to know what the dreamers dream about them, thinking in that way to know something of their state in the other world. After Ida died, several people dreamed about her as being in a garden of flowers; Filomena dreamed that she was singing psalms, in a very sweet voice, as she stood among the plants in blossom. As I think over the “dreamers” whom I have known, I find that they have all been sensitive, imaginative people, and often, though not always, in poor health. Often when people are in great trouble or danger, their friends who have crossed the river are sent back in dreams to comfort them. Before Edwige lost her husband (who left her, as you know, desolate, with her five children) she dreamed that she was in a little boat all alone on the sea, and a great cross rose out of the sea before her, and grew larger and larger; and then she saw the Madonna standing beside it, and looking at her compassionately, and as if she would have spoken to her, but could not. And a little while before Edwige’s daughter Cesina died, her little child that she had lost so many years before, came to her in a dream, and put her arms about her neck, and said: “Mamma, I pray so much for you!” After the death of Cesina, for a while she drooped so that I was afraid she would go after her. She grew

thin and white and silent; but one day, after many months, I heard her singing, faintly, a little hymn; and I gave thanks with all my heart! From that day the shadow was lifted away from her life. The prettiest dream story I know was told me by an old Florentine lady, the daughter of the sculptor Pampaloni, the same who carved those two great statues in the Piazza del Duomo. She is a very good old lady, and never told me a word that was not true; and she has told me this story over and over again, and never without tears. Her father and mother, who were very deeply attached to each other, made a promise each to the other, to the effect that, if the wife died before her husband, she should in some way let him know when she "received her crown"; and if he died first, he was to do the same for her. He was the first to be taken, and he left his wife, Carolina, and their young daughter, quite poor, so that they were obliged to leave their home, and move into small lodgings. They found themselves constrained also, with great regret, to part with their servant, Violante, who had been a long time with them, and was considered quite as one of the family. Some months after Pampaloni died, his daughter, now my old friend, dreamed that she saw her father, grown very beautiful in appearance, but still himself, in a large hall, which appeared to her like the vestibule of some palace: she asked him how he was, and he answered, pointing to a closed door: "*So well! But*

nothing to what I shall be when I pass that door!" Nothing else happened until the anniversary of his death, when he appeared again to his daughter in a dream, and said to her: "*Beppina, go to Carolina, and tell her that I have received my crown!*" On awaking, she went immediately to tell her mother, who was much comforted. A little later, as they sat at their breakfast, Violante, the servant, came in to see them; and the first words that she said, were: "I could not help coming to-day to tell the mistress about my dream! Last night in my sleep I saw the padrone, and he said to me: '*Violante, go to Carolina, and tell her that I have received my crown!*'" I could go on, almost indefinitely, telling you stories about dreams, but I think I have told you as much as you will care to hear at once; and besides, I want you to receive this letter on New Year's morning, and you will not, unless I bring it to an end.

THE STORY OF EDWIGE'S CHILDREN.

THE other day at the Orphan Asylum, as Edwige sat with the dear old Superior by my side (they have become great friends) she told her something about her children which she had never told me before, at least not with all the particulars. Once in her life, less than two years after her husband's death, when Clementina was not quite eleven, and little Tonina just beginning to run about alone, she was obliged to leave her home for a month. She had to do what work came to her hand—she could not choose; and what she had to do that month was to go to Livorno, with a family who wanted her to wait on a sick child. It was not all for gain that she did it; the family were neighbours of hers, and had been kind to her, and she had already been employed in serving the poor little creature, and it had grown so fond of her that it pined when away from her; so gratitude and compassion joined with the necessities of her family in sending her away. Before she went she put into Clementina's hand the money—very little indeed—which was to last the family while she was away. She could not write, but she made the

money up into various little parcels, and said to her daughter: "This is for bread, and this for oil, and this for salt," etc. And then she recommended the four little sisters to her care, and left them, all alone in the house for a month! It was a sad month for her, worse even than she had expected; and all the worse that she and the children could not write to each other. Sometimes it used to seem to her that the suspense, and the longing for her children, were more than she could bear; toward the end of the month she was so reduced that she could neither eat nor sleep. (And *thirty francs* were what she received for this month of Purgatory!) When they returned to Florence they arrived late in the evening, and her employers pressed her to stay with them until the morning, but her impatience was too great, and she hurried home on foot alone, without waiting even for a moment's rest. It was well that she did so. A man-servant, who had come up from Livorno two days before, had told the children that she was coming. And when, past midnight, she came in sight of her home, what did she see? In the deserted Piazza, on the little green in front of the Church of S. Francesco, her five children were all standing out in the moonlight, looking for her. I leave you to imagine what a happy meeting that was! When she went into the house she found it all swept and cleaned as well as any women could have done it: and Clementina went and

brought her all the folded papers in which she had left the money for their different expenses, and there were still a few pieces of copper left in each. Out of their great poverty the little creatures had saved something to give to their mother at her return!

EVENING PRAYER.

PREGHIERA DELLA SERA.

A LETTO a letto me ne vo,
L'anima mia, a Dio la do,
La do a Dio e a San Giovanni,
Che il nemico non m'inganni,
Nè di giorno nè di notte,
Nè al punto della morte,—
Tre o quattr' angeli di Dio,
Tutti intorno al letto mio,
Due da' piedi e due da capo,
GESU CRISTO al mio lato.

GESU CRISTO Lui mi disse,
Che vegliasse, che dormisse,
Che paura non avesse,
Nè de' morti nè de' vivi,
Nè di spiriti cattivi.

SIGNOR, mi metto giù,
La levata non lo so:
Se si levasse l'anima avanti il corpo,
GESU mio, datemi conforto.

EVENING PRAYER.*

Now I go to rest, and pray
God to watch and not to leave me :
And Saint John beside me stay,
Lest the enemy deceive me ;
From whom keep me, night and day,
And when mortal life gives way.
Of God's angels three or four,
Round about my bed shall stand ;
Two behind and two before,
JESUS CHRIST at my right hand.

JESUS CHRIST who doth me keep,
Told me both to wake and sleep,
Bid me rest, and have no dread,
Of the living or the dead,
Nor should spirits foul alarm me,
For he will not let them harm me.

I lay me down to rest and close my eyes,
I know not what the rising up may be :
But if my soul before my body rise,
LORD JESUS, be Thou near to comfort me.

* For Note see next page.

* From time immemorial the contadini have lain down to rest after their hard day's work comforted by this little prayer, or by something like it—for I have found almost as many versions of it as I have families. And the mothers still teach it to the children. Addio, Lettore.

F.

